LIBRARY EDITION

THE WORKS OF

ANATOLE FRANCE

IN ENGLISH

Edited by the late **FREDERIC CHAPMAN**
and **JAMES LEWIS MAY**

35 Volumes Uniform, Demy 8vo 7s. 6d net.

THE BODLEY HEAD

THE LATIN GENIUS

BY ANATOLE FRANCE

A TRANSLATION BY

WILFRID S. JACKSON

LONDON
JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD LIMITED

Made and Printed in Great Britain at
The Mayflower Press, Plymouth. William Brendon & Son, Ltd.

TO

DÉSIRÉ LEMERRE

VERY AFFECTIONATELY

ANATOLE FRANCE

"No flower of all shall see thy violets paled
City of Pericles! Nor yet in vain
That golden mouth, whence a god's breath exhaled,
So sweetly sang a Rome that should remain."

FRÉDÉRIC PLESSIS.

Found no lofty expectations on this title, the Latin Genius; you will find here nothing to justify them. It is an act of faith and of love for that Greek and Latin tradition, wherein resides all wisdom and beauty, and without whose pale is naught but error and vexation of spirit. Philosophy, Art, Science, Jurisprudence, all, we owe to Greece, and to her conquerors whom she overcame. The men of old time live on, and teach us yet.

A. Γ.

PARIS, *January* 1913.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Daphnis and Chloe	3
The Queen of Navarre	10
Paul Scarron	30
On the Language of La Fontaine	63
Molière	97
Jean Racine	133
Alain-René Le Sage	160
The Adventures of the Abbé Prévost	172
Bernardin de Saint-Pierre	199
Chateaubriand	232
Xavier de Maistre	256
Benjamin Constant	260
Sainte-Beuve, Poet	269
Albert Glatigny	293

THE LATIN GENIUS

THE LATIN GENIUS

DAPHNIS AND CHLOE

IT was the rich and pleasure-loving cities of Ionia that first gave currency to the Milesian Tales, whose destined end it was to rejoice the leisured in the afternoon of life with diverting stories of woman's guile. Men recked little of the public weal in those days. How did they beguile the hours as they reclined beneath the portico painted with light, winged figures, shaded by a clump of myrtles, what time the brook murmured its soft song? Did they read the poets of old? No: properly to savour them called for too great an effort, for too lofty a taste, for a culture that was now no more. This little book is easier in style, lighter in tone. Unroll the slender volume, you dweller in Miletus, and, one elbow softly pillowed on a purple cushion, you shall read how the vine-dresser's wife hides her lover in the wine-jar, and how for the love of a soldier the widow of Ephesus hanged her husband.

These Tales of Miletus—whereof not a few remain to us—were lightly sketched in. There is no development, no character-drawing; nothing but the incident. This unambitious literature was for long the only intimate reading Hellenism affected

Romance, the romance of love, did not put forth until the Roman period. It was in the East, the land of illusion, that there began to appear, in the third century of the Christian era, little books narrating in language of fastidious refinement the adventures of two fair children drawn together by mutual love, and sundered by cruel necessity. Such is the ordinary theme, and it is little varied. Mingled therewith are doings of pirates, the abduction of women, perhaps some tragic episode of love, or tale of incest refashioned from Euripides, designed to give the reader some pleasurable thrills of mild compassion or passing fear. Dion Chrysostom and a few others did, it is true, rise superior to these stage methods; but all supplied, for it was indispensable to the *genre*, an abundance of rustic local colour. This bucolic setting was wholly artificial and traditional; but it gave more pleasure even so than if it had been truer to nature, more frank, and more uncouth. Theocritus had long been one of the old school. The ruder, broader flavour of the Sicilian were no longer in the fashion. Such pictures must now be composed symmetrically, and this life of the country-side, under the four seasons, exactly disposed. No need to hide the artificiality of the arrangement, the excess of art. They were for town consumption. Life in great cities awoke a longing for the fields; so prone are we to value more highly what we lack than what we have. Palates, seared with the Greek wines, craved to be assuaged with milk. These scenes from nature, wrought for a society of wealthy voluptuaries, were like the paintings one sees on the walls of the houses in Pompeii; little trees and buildings mixed with scroll-work and spirals, and lost in a caprice of

ornamentation. The writer would be some rhetorician, very capable of adorning his subject with every traditional attraction. Whether it be Heliodorus of Emesa, Achilles Tatius of Alexandria, Xenophon of Antioch, or Xenophon of Ephesus, he is ever the same, an adept in literary ornament and parts of speech, a mind ever ornate, smooth, and polished. The authors of these diegemata, or dramatic writings, as they called their works (*διήγηματά δραματικά*), are acquainted with the whole Hellenic literature, by now complete, both the lesser poets and the great, whom they make it their business to expound. All the curiosities of literature are known to them. They have a long memory and are most ingenious in the weaving of words. As for seeing living things for themselves, or taking direct hold on any aspect of nature, that is not for them. Do they describe some scene of vintage-time, they have no care to give us the true vine-dresser, drawn from the life? It will be rather some neat epigram of portraiture on which they will refine and refine in a prose more artificial, and more highly wrought, than the most cunning verse of the Alexandrine poets. They refine on Meleager. They sign the sentence of a passing world. They are very old. And that is why they hearten themselves by telling tales of youth and love. They have no flesh and blood, but warm their wits with imagined ardours of budding adolescence.

The highly ingenious writer who composed the diegemata of *Daphnis and Chloe* was indubitably of this family. But the group is not contained within any circumscribed period. It begins to take shape in the days of Hadrian, and pushes far forward into the sunless Christian era. Nothing is known

of the writer who bequeathed us the masterpiece in this *genre*. The earliest manuscript of his work, the one that passed from Monte Cassino to the Library at Florence, does not mention his name. Another manuscript gives it as Λογγος (Longus). The name is scarcely Greek. Schoell will have it that Λογγος stands for λόγοι (tales). But there is no explaining away such an error in transcription; Frederic Jacobs and Picolos think it an inadmissible hypothesis. Moreover, barbaric names of this sort existed at a time when Hellenism was submerged in the Empire. In the Anthology of Planudes one meets with Rouphinos and Kaios who speak the tongue of Theocritus and Simonides. But this Longus—since a Longus there was—when did he flourish? We do not know. And Suidas, who mentions some of the very minor diegematists, does not seem to know the author of *Daphnis and Chloe*. Some Hellenists, in view of his style which, though affected, was yet the purest Greek, do not place him later than the third century. Others relegate him to the barbarism of the Theodosian sovereignty. I incline to see in him a Byzantine of the rarest. When one reflects that certain Anacreontic odes, and not the least delicate of them, were the work of a late day in Constantinople, one would hesitate to affirm that Longus was not a monk. His book is very pagan it is true. But it is a copy from the Antique. It would be a surprising thing, but nothing impossible, if this ivory Eros, of such curious workmanship, had been wrought in the cell of some monkish librarian. This monk, if he ever existed, must have had his small head fearfully and wonderfully furnished. Can you not see him, thin, yellow, dried, mummy-faced, with dull, lightless

eyes worn out with poring on every manuscript of every poet, but with never a sight of a green tree?

Be that as it may, the romance of *Daphnis and Chloe* came late into the world. It is of the end of the season. And yet it breathes the scent of a fair antiquity. There was ever, in that incomparable literature of old, whatever the precise period, a taste for imitation, though free, that, making itself felt strongly in the writers of the later epoch preserved them from contamination, and led them back to the dayspring of beauty. Even as young maidens receive from their elders and pass on to their successors the wreaths and wands that served their pastimes, so the poets of antiquity outgrew the forms and restrictions of idyll, ode, and epigram.

The overwrought prose of later comers appropriated these forms and settings, and even took over the outlines ready traced. The *Pastoral Loves of Daphnis and Chloe* are full of these small treasures so often seen but always pleasant to behold.

Shepherd rivalries, their tuneful contests, as they vie with each other, in alternate staves, such is the burden of all bucolic poetry from the very earliest Alexandrines. A poem of this kind, put into prose, is inserted in its entirety in our pastoral: "One day Daphnis fell out with Dorco. Each vaunted his beauty before Chloe who was judge, and a kiss from Chloe was to reward the victor." Here we have some refining on the original. In the days of the Sicilian, the prize was a bowl, a reed-pipe, a lamb. Daphnis and Dorco sing, and their alternate song composes, as it were, a little anthology wherein are gathered together the choice flowers of amœbean song. There are borrowings from Virgil, or at least from the Greek that Virgil imitated: *Alba ligustra cadunt.*

Elsewhere, in a passage descriptive of vintage-time, goodman Philetas comes forward with a graceful tale of how he has seen a winged child in his garden. And his tale has quite the flavour of Anacreon.

And since we mention the Anacreontic odes, we may recall Ode xx on a young girl:

"Would that I were a mirror, that thou might'st look on me! Would that I were thy tunic, O maiden, that I might be about thee; that I were pure water, to wash thy body; an essence, to perfume thee: a scarf, for thy bosom; a necklace of pearls for thy throat; a sandal, so thou pressedst me under thy foot."

Chloe utters like wishes.

"Oh," said she, "dreaming of Daphnis, why am I not his flute, that I might touch his lips! A youngling of the flock, that he might take me in his arms."

These lovers' wishes one meets with again, with a mystic touch, an accent more religious, in an ancient scholiast: Εἴθε λυρά καλή.

"Would I were a fair lyre of ivory! fair children should carry me to the heart of Dionysos. Would I were some great jewel of gold for a maiden's brow! a woman should bear me, a beautiful woman whom pure thoughts attend."

If one took the trouble to trace all its sources, one would recognise the text of Longus as a mosaic whose stones had been chosen with taste and put together with artistry. Many passages imitated by the diegematist are lost to us.

For instance, when Gnatho says:

"Let us return thanks to the eagles of Jupiter that they allow such beauty to remain on earth,"

Gnatho imitates a passage in Callimachus or in Philetas, which we have no longer, but a trace of which remains in these two lines of Propertius:

Cur hæc in terris facies humana moratur?
Jupiter, ignoro pristina furta tua.

In the little that is left of Menander, there are three verses on Eros, the most puissant of the gods, three pleasant verses that Longus has run into his prose. It is a flower culled by the wayside; but the author of *Daphnis and Chloe* lingers when he comes to old Homer; he takes from him details of domestic life, traits of primitive simplicity.

"Εσσω μιν χλαίνάν τε χιτῶνατε εἵματα καλα,
. . . δώσω δ'ὑπὸ ποσσὶ πέδιλα
Κήρυξ δε Φέρων ἂν ὅμιλον ἁπάντη
Δαῖζ' ἔνδεξια πᾶσιν.

The gleaner, happy in his task, adds to his sheaf all the stories of metamorphosis, and the fairy tales of old mythology; his gods are little gods, the gods of the village. They are no bigger than the two children they protect. The religion of the story is artless and unprofound. How far away are the great gods and true! It was no lying voice that echoed down the coasts of all the seas, crying: "Pan, great Pan is dead." Pan is here but a little god, who has all he can do to protect a shepherdess and a goatherd.

And this shepherdess and her goatherd make the sweetest, the most graceful, the most charming figures of youth ever art created. *Daphnis and Chloe* is the awakening of the senses, painted with a delicious *venustas*, a picture that will last as long as the senses shall awaken and desire be born anew with successive generations.

But enough. My only wish was to show what cunning artistry has gone to the making of this book of love.

THE QUEEN OF NAVARRE



HRIFTY fathers, thriftless sons! The reign of Louis XI had been a mean and selfish period. A mean, niggardly folk of middle-class aspect, harsh, boastful, quarrelsome, and given to bawdry—such are the portraits of that day. All, whether in fur or ermine, or cloth tunic, contrived to out-Patelin Patelin. The offspring of these saving and prudent parents were to break out, and squander their fathers' pence in many a mad frolic; and some among them were fated to make a pretty flutter in the dovecotes of science, art, and religion.

Under Louis XI, certain gentlemen of estate, the ripe fruit of ancient chivalry, a dwindling race, lived retired in their manors enjoying a studious leisure, dwelling quietly, in the midst of their books. *In angello cum libello.*

Such a one was Charles of Angoulême, father of the Princess Marguerite. Count Charles was of the blood of that good Duke Charles who, when a prisoner in the hands of the English, rimed those gentle ballads and rondeaux of his, dainty and delicate as the miniatures of Jehan Fouquet. He was son to that Prince Jean who turned into French verse the barbarous scholastic couplets he believed to have come from ancient Rome and to have been writ by Cato. He copied with his own hand the

Consolations of Boëthius. Prince Jean was an elegant scholar.

His son Charles aspired, even as he did, "to the celestial manna of good doctrine."* He had a rich library in his castle at Cognac. But the times, "still dark," were labouring under the "misfortune and calamity of the Goths, who had devoted all good literature to destruction."† On the 11th of April, 1492, at Angoulême, his wife, Louise, brought into the world a daughter, of the name of Marguerite, which in Latin means a gem, or precious stone. And Marguerite was to be, indeed, a pearl among princesses. Two years later the good Duke quitted this sublunary sphere, and Marguerite was brought up by her mother, the beautiful, clever, and terrible Louise of Savoy, who made much of the bards, and prided herself on her knowledge of poetry. She was a harsh, grasping, and inhuman woman, who, in later years, soiled herself with shameful deeds and crimes to which the daughter shut her eyes. He who will not blind his eyes for the love or the faith that he professes, really knows nor love nor faith.

Marguerite grew to womanhood in the house of her fathers. And there, in some nook shut in by flamboyant wood-carvings, she would open the book-chest, and draw from it maybe a manuscript in brocaded cover, and read a chapter of the *Imitation*, a tale from the *Round Table*, or a fragment of Aristotle.‡ From all sides there whispered

* Rabelais, II, viii. † *Ibid.*

‡ Manuscripts of Aristotle, of the *Golden Legend*, of the *Imitation*, of the romance of the *Round Table*, are numbered, along with the works of Dante, among the appointments of the Château of Cognac.

in her youthful ear the enchantments of Italy, newly discovered in 1495 by the Little King Charles VIII; the Earthly Paradise Regained, with no jealous god as yet to guard the fruit of knowledge and of pleasure, the miracles of art and courtesy, revealed to the people of France.*

All the enlightened minds of France turned in those days towards that shining land: they eagerly imitated the Italians in their habits and their speech. Marguerite read Petrarch, who later on, charmed also her brother, Francis; she read Dante; she breathed in the odour of that flower of courtesy which perfumes the Purgatorio and the Inferno of the Florentine. Can you not see her, as she bends over the book's illuminated vellum, losing herself as she wanders through the dolorous city following the interlaced phantoms of Paolo and Francesca?

* *A terrestrial paradise*—such was the exclamation of the French in Italy. Charles VIII wrote from Naples to the Duke of Bourbon, his brother-in-law: "You would not believe what beautiful gardens are mine in this town, for, on my word, only Adam and Eve seem lacking to make it an earthly Paradise, so fair are they, and so richly stocked with all things good and rare; as I hope to recount to you when I see you. And moreover I find in this country the best of painters and to them you must apply for the making of the most beautiful paintings possible, for there are no pictures at Bauxe, Lyons, or at any place in France to approach them in beauty and rich quality. And therefore I shall attach them to my retinue, and bring them to perform the like at Amboise."

Briçonnet writes from Naples to Queen Anne of Brittany:

"Madame, would that you could have seen this town and the fair things it holds, for it is an Earthly Paradise. The King, of his grace, was pleased to show me at my coming everything within and without the town; and I can assure you that the beauty of these resorts, so apt to all pleasant uses of this world, almost surpasses belief. The King wishes you were here. Nor can he esteem Amboise nor any other place whatever more highly than this."

She reads:

". . . Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria. . . ."*

And, imprinted on her memory, she cherishes those lines of whose bitter truth she was one day destined to make probation.

She was, it is the testimony of all who had to do with her, of a smiling sweetness, of good accord, open to merry talk, and leaning to laughter which did not ill-suit her robust type of beauty. Beautiful she was, but on the grand scale, with the noble facial line and length of nose that marked her brother.†

Her life was at its dawn when the dawn of the Renaissance broke with incomparable splendour. "Light and dignity" were restored to letters. The world was filled with "knowing men, most learned schoolmasters, and vast libraries. The

* "A sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things."—TENNYSON.

† The portraits we have of her depict her as I have described her. Francis I was very like her in feature. The drawing which portrays her when she was about fifty years of age, in the Béarnaise head-dress, and with a spaniel on her knee, is firm in line, and brings out the features well. The work is in Clouet's manner. It gives the character of the head, but not the charm. Charm, or what is charm to us to-day, was not taken into account by painters of that school But that Marguerite possessed it, is not to be doubted. Bonnivet, Marot, the Constable de Bourbon, and many another, are better judges than we are on this point. In the Luxembourg gardens, that classic region, is a charming statue of Francis the First's sister. I only mention it because all my readers will have seen it. I know some who have written verses on the pedestal. But this figure recalls in no way our great and good Marguerite. With her little nose uplifted, she is at best a Margot, Henry the Fourth's Margot, and as visualized by Alexandre Dumas at that.

very women and children aspired to this praise and celestial manna of good learning."*

Marguerite had for preceptor Robert Hurault, Archdeacon and Abbé of Saint-Martin d'Autun. Canossa gave her lessons in Hebrew. Hebrew was then regarded as the key to the philosophies. The theses of Pico della Mirandola on the Cabala, and Reuchlin's treatise *de Verbo mirifico*, showed that these Jews, driven out from Spain, despised, harassed, and tortured throughout the Christian world, so humble and so wretched, were deeply versed in every branch of knowledge. Marguerite gathered some notion at least of that ancient tongue which, according to the wise men, alone called God by His name.

Her childhood had witnessed the first rude wonders of printing; psalters and romances in lettres de forme and lettres de somme, lettres de St. Pierre.†

In her youth, the beautiful editions of Aldus Manutius, printed in the italic letters known as Venetian, multiplied the masterpieces of antiquity.

"Printing both elegant and correct" was invented in this age "by divine inspiration, as on the other hand, the invention of artillery was the work of the devil."‡ The treasures of knowledge and poetry brought from dazzling Italy, were spread abroad in France by the Estiennes and the Vascosans.

She was seventeen, and her young brother, Francis, had been affianced three years to Claude

* Rabelais, *loc. cit.*

† Lettres de forme: a certain kind of small type used in the fourteenth century, chiefly for missals. Lettres de somme: a type so called because it was employed in the printing of the Summa of St. Thomas Aquinas. Lettres de St. Pierre: Gothic type.

‡ Rabelais, *loc. cit.*

of France, when, for reasons of State, she married the Duke of Alençon, a man skilled in warfare, a soldier of ripe age who, of the inventions of the age, took more interest in gunpowder than in the printing-press—in no way the man to suit her.

She was naturally affectionate, and had the liveliest love for her brother, who had become King in 1515 under the style of Francis I. This knightly monarch, hot-blooded and shallow-brained, hail fellow well met, and easy of access with his familiars, magnificent in his public life, headlong and egoistic albeit the best of sons, returned his sister as much affection as his superficial and pleasure-loving character was capable of. She was his "darling"; he held her in high esteem, and never was esteem more justly bestowed.

Marguerite, whose big mouth could smile with such fine intent, wise, learned Marguerite, was of good counsel and well able to bring a difficult business to a successful issue. Her imperturbable gentleness, her thoughtful kindliness wrought wonders in the council chamber.

"Her discourse was such that ambassadors who had speech with her were quite carried away, and made great report of it to their peoples on their return, of what great comfort she was to the King her brother, for they always sought audience of her, after the main business of their embassy; and very often, when he had some great matter on his hands, he remitted it to her, expecting from her the conclusion and entire disposal of it. She well knew how to meet them and please them with fair speech, for she was prolific therein, and very skilful in worming their real thoughts from them: and the King would often say how much she helped

him, and what burden she took off him by employing the charm of her intelligence and sweetness."*

She made use of her good credit on behalf of poets and savants "who had love for good letters and for Christ." Pious, and with a leaning to mysticism, but with an inquiring mind and virtuous heart, she held monks in horror, their mummeries, their ignorance, and their debaucheries. Erasmus, who gibed unsparingly at the stupidity that went in monkish gown, and held monks to be the most jealous guardians of universal ignorance, Erasmus was her reading. In 1512 a very learned man, Guillaume Fabri, or Lefebvre, of Étaples, published his commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul. This book, wherein the Scriptures were submitted to free examination, became a breviary to Marguerite, who followed in the footsteps of those early reformers, those modest and learned men whom we may call the scholiasts of Holy Writ. She herself entered on a lengthy correspondence with Briçonnet, the Bishop of Meaux, and gave herself up, under the influence of this subtle director, to many fantastic reveries bred of a deeply meditated mysticism. For the time being we may speak of her, with Rabelais,† as that "abstracted soul, ravished with ecstasies."

She was the subtlest of theologians; spiders' web and gossamer were coarse ropes beside the mystic thread she spun on the spiritual wheel bestowed on her by Briçonnet. The most robust minds are often visited by these sudden yearnings after the subtle and the unknowable.‡

* Brantôme. † Rabelais. Dedication to Book III.

‡ Balzac, who, at times, will tell a tale more roundly than ever did our princess, is mystical and incomprehensible in his *Lambert* and his *Séraphita* even as Marguerite in the letter to Briçonnet.

But the teaching of Briçonnet, in its essence, encouraged a return to the Bible, and the Reformation of the Church. Briçonnet, like Lefebvre of Étaples, held that the Gospel "was no longer preached in its purity or without the admixture of human tradition." And so Marguerite was set by this director on the path of heresy, a path neither of them pursued to its end.

She won over her brother, the King, to the party of the reformers of that early day, when sweetness, clarity, and serenity were in the ascendant. But Luther burnt the Pope's Bull, and the storm broke (1520). The time for wise folk like Erasmus, as for good folk like Marguerite, was over and gone. In December, 1521, we find her writing to Briçonnet:

"The King and Madame* are more than ever bent on reforming the Church, and have made up their minds publicly to proclaim that the truth of God is no heresy."

To which Briçonnet replied:

"The true flame lodged long past in your heart, and in that of the King and of Madame, by a grace so abundant and great that I know none greater, I know not now whether it be not damped down and hidden."

As far as the Queen Mother was concerned, who cared only for money, and the King, who cared only for women, the bishop's misgivings were well founded. But to know what was really in the mind of Louise of Savoy we must read her diary. "In December of this year 1522, my son and I, by grace of the Holy Ghost, are beginning to know for what they are, all these hypocrites of divers colours, white, black, grey, and dun, from whom God in

* Louise of Savoy, her mother.

his clemency and infinite goodness, preserve and defend us, for, if Christ speak truth, there is no more dangerous brood in all human kind."

It does not look as if Louise of Savoy confided such thoughts to her journal to gain indulgences.

But Francis I plunged recklessly into the Italian wars. We know how he was taken prisoner, that mad day at Pavia. The Duke of Alençon was a failure in this fight; it was his last. A month later he died, and Marguerite, at thirty-three years of age, must needs don the widow's cap. Then her every thought went out to her brother, whose misfortunes only seemed to make him the more lovable in her eyes. She sent him the Epistles of St. Paul translated into French. But Charles the Fifth's prisoner was not of a complexion to find consolation in the Scriptures. She assured him in her letters of her ardent devotion: "Whatever may become of me, though the very ashes of my bones be scattered to the winds in your service, no task will be unsuited to me, nor fraught with hardship or with pain, but on the contrary, 'twill be dignity, peace, and honour."*

She could not stop there. Furnished with full powers from the Queen Regent, her mother, she embarked at Aigues-Mortes, landed at Barcelona,

* Michelet, reading hastily Marguerite's letters to her brother, saw in them what he saw everywhere. This *enfant terrible* of history groans, sighs, weeps and then stamps, tears and scratches. What he says of Marguerite (*Réforme*, p. 175) is but the dream of an old man, *ægri somnia*. M. Felix Frank, who shows us what is admirable in Michelet, his power of insight and perception, is not duped by Michelet's monomania and morbidity. He has restored their true character to the relations between the brother and sister. I refer to the excellent study, full of knowledge and sense, at the head of his edition of *Marguerites de la Marguerite des princesses*.

entered Madrid, and threw her arms about her brother's neck. Save for her, he said, he had been but a dead man. Marguerite's goodness was not lulled to sleep amid this atmosphere of caresses. She took action, bestirred herself, discussed conditions, proposed terms. Her strength lay in her good heart and her rectitude. She said herself: "I am the woman you know, the woman who always let herself be won over by everyone." The wily Emperor forbore to snare so noble a prey. Marguerite left Toledo without having achieved her object.

Charles V, under the mistaken impression that she was bearing away with her the King's abdication in the Dauphin's favour, had it in his mind to order her arrest if the term of her safe conduct expired before she passed the frontier. She reached Salse, in French territory, one hour before the expiration of the prescribed period.

The Court of Marguerite was open to wits and scholars. Clément Marot was of the number. He, who was part Norman, part Quercinois, ready of speech and loose in conduct, a delightful poet, and the vainest of men, was *couché*, or borne on Marguerite's civil list, from 1524:

"Il n'est que d'être bien couché,"*

as he says in one of those ballads he turned so easily.

Wounded by a ball from an arquebus at the battle of Pavia, he limped back to France resourceless and in very bad case. He sought out his mistress, the Diana of his verses, but he found her to his undoing. The traitress shut her door against him, and denounced him as a heretic. The persecution of the Reformers, begun in France during the King's

* There is nothing like a soft billet

captivity by the Queen Regent who had bought the Pope's alliance, was become furious, and the first faggots were a-kindling. Marot was put in the Châtelet, and would only have left it for the Place de Grève with a halter round his neck, if Marguerite had not reclaimed him through a friend of hers, Louis Gaillard, Bishop of Chartres, who, under pretext of throwing him into prison, lodged him in a light and airy house standing in the midst of a fine garden. There he kept his Lenten fast in peace, and when Easter came was quietly set at liberty. It was at this juncture that, moved by gratitude and also by Marguerite's beauty, he expressed the liveliest admiration for the pearl of Princesses. He establishes her his lady and his mistress:

"My mistress is of such surpassing worth,
Her form is fair and straight, and chaste, and clean;
Constant in hours of sorrow or of mirth,
Never too gay or mournful to be seen.
Even as an angel's is her spirit keen,
The subtlest wit that ever spurned the earth.
O Marvel! Here is something seen uncouth,
For I am bond-slave to a monster dread:
Monster I say—for that she has, in sooth,
A woman's form, man's heart, and angel's head!" *

He served his lady in all worthiness and honour, and his service supplied him with matter for a pretty rondeau:

"'Tis no vain word—I do profess
To serve one whom all virtues dress
Beyond all women—her one name
A flower, and one whose royal claim

* These verses remind one of those made by La Fontaine for Madame de la Sablière, whose wit, says the fabulist,

"Has man's beauty and woman's grace."

Makes clear her ancient high noblesse.
So chaste she may outdo Lucrece,
Of wisdom, wit, and strength in stress,
The ensign and the oriflamme.
'Tis no vain word.
Lo! men may say; he doth confess
His own, his Lady, his Princess.
But all men wot here is no blame;
For never was in love or fame,
This thousand year, a like *duchesse*,
'Tis no vain word."

Marguerite was a poet. She rimed mystery-plays and farces in the style, by then a little out of date, of Alain Chartier and Eustache Deschamps. She was great at allegory, and her personified virtues and vices talk as in the days of her grandmother. But, after all, she was a poet, and at times could express the feelings of her fair soul with great natural charm.

The little song she made, "being in her carrying chair during the King's sickness," has a gust of passion:

"Him to welcome were I fain
Who came knocking on my gate
To say 'The King is come again
In good heart and good estate.'
His sister here, nigh dead of late,
She could take him in her arms
Who brought such joyful news of State—
Her brother safe from war's alarms." *

* Marguerite's poetical writings, collected by her Groom of the Chambers, Simon de la Haye, were printed at Lyons in 1547, under the title: *Les Marguerites de la Marguerite des princesses, très illustre Royne de Navarre.* The modern edition of M. Felix Frank is preceded by a notice of which I have made mention. I refer to it again because the editor, who is also a poet, is, as it seems to me, very sensible of the poetic talent of Marguerite.

Marot does not fail to praise his Lady's poesy. According to him, one has but to hear Marguerite talk and one is not surprised that she can write so well:

"'Mid other gifts of ever-living grace
Her writing hath such high and sweet intent,
Marvel I must, my Lady's words to trace,
For man may prove no greater wonderment.
But when I hear to speech such wisdom lent
And when I watch her pen upon the wing,
I check again; my wonder now is spent
Upon the folly of my marvelling."

The courteous Marguerite gives praise for praise. Clément having composed a *dizain* (a ten-lined poem) for Hélène Tournon, a lady in the duchess's suite, and the lady being, in the matter of rime, as dumb as any of the finny tribe that followed in the wake of Venus' car, the good Marguerite must take pen and make answer that the poet's verse is beyond payment:

"'Though money may be weighed in scale
One cannot—if my word prevail—
Prize your fair science as one ought."

Words worthy a Princess, and which bring to mind that dauphiness of a more Gothic age who, finding Alain Chartier asleep in a corridor, kissed the lips that uttered such fair words!

Did this gallantry go further; and had the widow of the Duke of Alençon a more secret intercourse with the poet, whom she found so pleasing, and who was so free in speech and conduct? No, and we know how this virtuous lady managed matters when she was too closely pressed. She did not grow angry, but she said "No," and no threats nor tears made her go back on that sweet and smiling nay.

And she was prompt to rebuff when the attack was hotter. When, one fine night, Admiral Bonnivet, in gold-laced shirt and broidered night-cap, appeared through a trap by the bedside of Madame Marguerite, and slipped into her bed where she lay, she, who was no weakling, was no sooner awakened than she set to work to fight, bite, and scratch that gallant until he let go. The lady in waiting, a lady of years and discretion, ran in in her chemise at the sound of her mistress' outcry, and the Admiral descended swiftly by his trap-door. Once before his mirror with a candle, he saw on his face reasons for keeping the house for a fortnight. The Admiral was a bold hand at a boarding-party, as we may see. And he risked his head in the venture, for it would have leaped from his shoulders at a word from Madame Marguerite. But the word was not spoken, and after that we must love her outright.

Her part in the religious quarrels then breaking out was altogether that of love and peace. Her inclination was towards the reformers, who numbered among their leaders the best intellects, the most learned and serious men of the age. Howbeit, she never altogether severed herself from the Papacy, which she would have seen amended but not destroyed.

The reformation she desired would have reconciled Pope and Luther. Alas! She had too much sense to hope for the concord that she longed for. Meanwhile, she gave asylum to the fugitives, and bestirred herself to snatch the reformers from prison and the stake. She made great efforts, though vain, to save Dolet and Berquin.

Berquin she did once succeed in rescuing from

the clutches of Parliament. And after this good work she wrote as follows to Anne of Montmorency:

"My son, since your letter by carrier, I have received that from the baillie of Orleans, and thank you for the pleasure you have done me in the matter of poor Berquin, which I appreciated as though it were for myself; and you may indeed say that you have delivered me from prison, since I esteem the kindness as done to me."

Lefebvre of Étaples (Fabri, as they called him) was greatly harassed during the King's captivity. Marguerite prevailed on her brother to write to the Parliament that they should leave the good old man in peace.

A little later she sent word to Anne de Montmorency:

"The good man Fabri has written to me that he is not happy at Blois, on account of the annoyance he there experiences. And he would willingly visit some friend for a time for change of air, if it were the King's pleasure to give him leave of absence. He has put his library in order, arranged and catalogued his books, and would hand it over to whomsoever the King pleases."

The visit to a friend was but a feint. The good man went to Nérac, where he quietly finished his term of years.

She interested herself on behalf of Erasmus in the proceedings instigated by the pedants of Sorbonne against that man of learning and intelligence. Charles de Saint-Marthe, whom they would have burnt as a heretic at Grenoble, found welcome and good cheer at her hands, at Alençon.

"She made urgent application that the Court

(of Bordeaux) should set at liberty a certain Andrew Melancthon, accused of heresy, and held prisoner at the Conciergerie." It would take too long to name all the victims she snatched from the executioners.

Her brother thought of marrying her to Henry VIII of England, who was then negotiating with Rome for his detestable divorce. One shudders to think of the life that the gentle and intelligent Marguerite would perforce have led with that bloated and cruel-hearted pedant. It was Anne Boleyn, the English jade, who took the place of the discarded Catherine. Marguerite, having escaped from this dreadful menace, married on July 24th, 1527, Henry II, King of Navarre, a penurious little princeling. She was then thirty-five. Her second husband was much younger than she, in contrast to the first who had been much older.

She made her little kingdom a refuge for the persecuted. Des Périers, de la Haye, du Moulin, Brodeau, Gruget, Le Maçon, Denisot, Pelletier, Lefebvre d'Étaples, Lecomte, d'Arande, Toussaint, found honourable asylum at Nérac. Marguerite was accused of sharing the convictions of those whom she sheltered, and the charge was not without foundation. Noël Béda, Syndic of the Theological Faculty, laid before that body a poem of the Queen's, entitled *Le Miroir de l'âme pécheresse* —the Mirror of the Sinful Soul. Its author said no word of Saints or of Purgatory, which went to prove that she believed neither in the one nor the other. Guillaume Petit, Bishop of Senlis, came forward as Marguerite's advocate, and she was acquitted under the nose of the orthodox Syndic of Orthodoxy. The said Béda incited the Principal

of the College of Navarre to produce a morality play, acted by the students, in which a woman leaves her spinning to accept, at the hands of a Fury, an abominable book, the Gospel rendered into the French tongue. Béda here overstepped the mark. Francis let him know it, for he sent him to Mont St. Michel, where he died. The King was often approached on the subject. One day, Anne de Montmorency, even he whom Marguerite addressed as her son, holding forth to Francis on the progress that heresy was making, "made no difficulty or scruple in telling him, that if he wished to extirpate heretics from his kingdom, he must begin in his own Court, and among those nearest him, naming the Queen, his sister. To which the King replied:"

"We will speak not of her, she loves me too well, she will never hold but what I hold, nor ever embrace a religion which would prejudice my state."*

The King of Navarre, who was a man of feeling, though rude and rough, tormented her about her attachment to the reformers. One day, when a sermon was to be preached in the Queen's room, "he came in, resolved to punish the minister, and finding that they had afforded him the means of escape, the remnants of his anger fell on his wife, who received a box on the ear, and was told, 'Madame, you want to know too much.'"†

Nevertheless, the Court of Nérac had more than ever the taint of heresy. Farces were performed after Marguerite's manner, wherein the Papacy was mishandled.

We must picture to ourselves the Queen of

* Brantôme. † Théodore de Bèze.

Navarre in her little Court at Nérac, wearing her Bearnaise-hooded mantle and the black she never put aside after the death of her son Jean; grown old now, her beauty lost, but not her gift of pleasing, smiling sweetly with her big mouth, and, business dispatched, with some half-done broidery in hand, conversing with learned folk, or telling some story of monkish doings. Then we must follow her to her closet, and read the admissions of deep sadness that she suffers to escape her as she writes. Then it is, in her loneliness, that the lines of that old Dante of her childhood come back to her mind:

> "... Nessun maggior dolore
> Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
> Nella miseria. ..."

She rendered them into her own ingenuous words:

> "Douleur n'y a qu'au temps de la misère
> Se recorder de l'heureux et prospère,
> Comme autrefoys en Dante j'ay trouvé.
> Mais le sçay mieulx pour avoir esprouvé
> Félicité et infortune austère." *

A sad and touching avowal she had let fall long before in one of her letters; she had written: "I have borne more than my burden of that weariness known to every creature of good birth."

Creature well born in good faith, born to the noblest sorrow, born to suffer with all suffering humanity, and to carry in the battle of life but balm

* "Sorrow is none, such as in days of care
To call to mind the happy days and fair,
As, former time, in Dante I have read.
And know it better, now that I have sped
Felicity, and known ill-fortune bare."

and electuaries. Soul gentle and lofty, filled with peace, brave in friendship, not sparing herself so she spared hers, and forsaking her repose that her friends might find it. I would apply to her the beautiful words that Sophocles assigned to Antigone. A little Greek will never affright the shade of so learned a princess:

Οὗτοι συνέχθειν ἀλλὰ συμφιλεῖν ἔφυν *

Honest Marguerite loved gay talk, and laughed with a will at the doings of monks' gowns and women's petticoats. Apt word and merry speech were, as Brantôme says, "more than her daily bread." Boccaccio gave her infinite pleasure. Her groom of the Chambers, Antoine Le Maçon, dedicated to her the translation of the *Decameron*, which he published in 1545. The book enchanted the Court.

Marguerite makes one of her characters say:

"Therewith, I think there is none of you but has read the Hundred Tales of Boccaccio, recently translated into French from the Italian, whereof the King, Francis, first of his name, Monsieur the Dauphin, and Madame la Dauphine, and Madame Marguerite, make so much, that Boccaccio, could he hear them where he is, might rise again to receive such praise from such personages."

She herself wrote tales "in her carrying chair, going about: for at home she had more serious occupations."†

She proposed to imitate Boccaccio in these tales of hers, "except in one thing, which is to set down nothing that is not true." She put into her stories under borrowed names, her father, her mother, her

* "'Tis not my nature to join in hating, but in loving."

† Brantôme.

brother, her husband, and herself, nor did she leave out Bonnivet's trap-door and the marks she had set on the Admiral's countenance.

These tales, written in bold and simple style, were to form a *Decameron* after the example of Boccaccio. But she who told them had furnished but seven of the days when death took her. This best of Princesses expired on the 21st December, 1549, in her Château of Odos, in Bigorre. She left a daughter, Jeanne d'Albret, who was mother to Henry IV.

PAUL SCARRON



HE Scarron family had its origin in Piedmont. In the thirteenth century one Louis Scarron founded a chapel at Moncalier, and there, three hundred years later, his marble tomb adorned with the arms of his family was still to be seen. There were Scarrons established at Lyons in the sixteenth century. This branch was in business. A Claude Scarron, "a merchant of the town of Lyons, died in Paris at the house of a shoemaker on the Pont Saint-Michel, on Monday, the fourteenth day of the month of August, 1595." The Scarrons, having settled in Paris, took to the long robe. Under Henry IV they included eight judges in the Court of Parliament.

Paul Scarron, in 1589, was admitted to the Paris Parliament, where he took his seat as Judge in the Supreme Court. Pierre, his uncle, was Bishop of Grenoble, Catharine, his cousin, married Antoine duc d'Aumont.

This Paul Scarron had a hot head under his hat of office.* He is to be numbered among those august senators, those fathers of the Republic, those schoolers of Kings, who would cede no title of their prerogative in their zeal for the State, but substituted themselves for the State they stood for. When the obsequies of Henry IV took place, he was

* The *bonnet carré*

one of the stiffest in disputing the pretensions of the bishops, who were placed in the funeral procession by the Comte de Soissons, immediately after the hearse. The Judiciary had vainly laid claim to this precedence. They pressed rudely on our dignitaries of the Church all along the route, and Counsellor Scarron, who galled the clerical kibes a little too freely, was arrested by the officials.

Unbending as he may have been in robe and ermine, he was an easy man in his own house. Shortly before he entered Parliament he married the demoiselle Gabrielle Goguet, by whom he had three daughters, Marie, Anne, and Françoise; and three sons: Pierre, Jean, and Paul. The last-named, who came into the world in the month of April, 1607, did not live to see the summer. But on July 4th, 1610, yet another child of the same bed was held at the font by Alexandre d'Elbène, first usher to the Queen, and Captain of fifty men-at-arms, and by Marie d'Aligre, wife of Philippe de Béthune, tutor to the King's brother. The little Christian was called Paul, after him whom he replaced. And if the mother's thought turned to the child that was gone, Paul could say, as once another little innocent, "I am myself my little brother."

This one was to live. And a strange enough fate was in store for him.

Gabrielle Goguet gave birth to one more child, dedicated, like its mother, to the Angel of the Annunciation, and then the poor woman, who had eight times brought life into the world, laid down her own. She died on September 10th, 1613, and her body was borne next day to St. Sulpice.

Her place at board and in bed was unoccupied

for four years. Then, the 2nd April, 1618, Counsellor Scarron married, as his second wife, Françoise de Plaix, who gave him a daughter, called Marie after the eldest daughter of the first family, now dead, and then two more daughters, Madeleine and Claude.

The good man was dissatisfied with the turn taken by public affairs. His need of argument stifled him, for he could no longer give it vent. Cardinal de Richelieu handled the Parliament men with remorseless severity, and rendered them impotent for good or ill. At the first symptom of resistance he had them into the Louvre in a body and set them on their knees, while a secretary mutilated one of their injunctions, and inscribed, on their own register, a decree of censure on them. Parliament, thus humiliated, became more submissive. But the fires of liberty still burned, though banked, and Scarron and his colleagues lost no chance of annoying the Cardinal.

Parliament, for instance, refused for eighteen months to register the letters-patent for establishing the Academy. Counsellor Scarron set himself, most indignantly, against the demands. He was humiliated, and he was furious. To settle the fate of the reformers, to safeguard the liberties of the citizens, to remonstrate on occasion with the King, were cares worthy the Lutetian Senate, but to arrange the meetings of forty men whose wits were all their furniture—pooh! One did not wear the ermine for such petty matters. The Cardinal was as tyrannical as Domitian, and Counsellor Scarron made no secret of it. "It reminds one," he cried, "of that Emperor who, after he had deprived the Senate of all hand in

public affairs, consulted it on the matter of what sauce should be served with a fine turbot he had received from some distant shore."

While the Counsellor grew warm in dispute, the offspring of poor Gabrielle Goguet, now well-grown, were getting on very badly with their stepmother, who abused them in season and out of season, for she had a mind fertile in quarrel. There should have been no difficulty for all, big and little alike, to live in the Counsellor's home, where twenty thousand livres came in yearly to keep the households going. But it made the good lady of Plaix boil with rage to see another woman's children sharing the good things with her own.

Paul, a lad of good disposition, sunny temper and open heart, suffered much in the house. There was a touch of the madcap about him that would have made him the easiest fellow in the world to get on with, given a little love; but he did not get it, and he had too much brains for the lady's taste. He had plenty of love to bestow, but none for the woman who filled his mother's place so ill. And when he was grown up he noticed with displeasure, careless as he was of his own belongings, that his stepmother used every conceivable device to benefit her own children at the expense of the others. The man who stood up to Cardinal de Richelieu did not stand up to Françoise, his lady. To fight stoutly in public life is one thing, but one likes peace at home; when a man is growing old, and the hairs on his chin are white, he likes to pass his evenings quietly in his arm-chair, his feet on the fender. And if so be that your Françoise discreetly sees to all things, brings your glass of hot, mulled wine nicely flavoured with nutmeg,

and, with her keys at her side, manages her house as a good housewife should; if she brings order and economy with her, keeps an eye on everything, gear, livestock, and servants, moving with light and noiseless feet; and if she be buxom and good to look on into the bargain, must you not smile on her, let her do and say what she likes, listen to her grievances, and always take her part? To indulge her is to indulge yourself. To send a son packing is a little thing, if she ask it. Children are always ungrateful, always wanting in respect; they go off to their unseemly amusements. They dance by night, and gamble by day.

Paul was exiled from the paternal mansion. The greybeard sent him, not to the devil, but to Charleville, to a relative of the family. Did he find companions to his liking? Probably the Ardennes seemed somewhat of a wilderness to him. After two years of exile, he was taken back on condition that he should take orders. He did so. It committed him to nothing, and opened the possibility of a benefice—one never knows. Paul Scarron was on the way to become an *abbé d'alcôve* —a closet priest. They were coming into vogue.

A little later, about 1634, Paul Scarron, furnished with a well-filled purse by his father, who, in spite of age, was no miser, set out for Rome. The journey was but rarely undertaken at that time, and of those who set out some stopped at Lyons. The young abbé led a merry life in the City of the Popes, where there were courtesans in plenty. As for the Coliseum, the triumphal arches, St. Peter's, the wonders of antiquity and of the Renaissance, he doubtless bestowed on them a good deal of attention, for he loved the arts and took pleasure in

whatever was beautiful, but his bent was to laughter and mockery. He met, in a suburb of the city, with a man older than himself by some years, grave, peaceable, and modest of demeanour, sublime in his genius and simplicity, and already an honour to French painting, Nicolas Poussin. The abbé, who could well appreciate painting, and practised it at times, became, by a certain amount of insistence and importunity, a companion of this retiring man who lived like a good workman, remote from the world and its ways with his young wife. Nicolas Poussin would dwell with affection on some fine, long-drawn horizon, some noble architectural outline, on the pure shapes of a group of women and children in the Campagna. He had an eye for the beauty of things. Scarron's taste was other; he asked for the comedy of the wineshop, porters' squabbles, the coarse delights and coarse brawls of the common people. He was quick to seize on the deformities and baser sides of nature. He said good-bye to Rome and to Poussin, and turned up again in Paris in all the vigour of youth.

Good-looking and well-made, adroit of mind and of body, kind, open-hearted, and unselfish, he was made welcome by every one, and his good humour delighted the social gatherings of the Marais.

The Marais* recently built on the site of the market gardens, was the residence of fashion. The polite world made its abode in the brick-faced mansions, and took the air under the low arcades of the Place Royale.

Here our young Scarron was to be seen then, in

* A quarter in Paris now occupied by a part of the third and fourth arrondissements and containing many ancient buildings, principally of the seventeenth century.

plumed hat and with bows of ribbon at his knees, like a *petit marquis*. He had left his priest's bands behind him at Rome or somewhere. He danced his part in the ballets, and played the lute like Saint-Amant, or like M. de Lenclos, whose daughter was so famous. He could draw a miniature of a pretty woman, and he could drink like a German. So he had plenty of accomplishments. Ladies received him at their *levées*. In short, he was a dashing young blade and sped his days with the zest of those times of lutes and cloaks and rapiers. A sweet creature, Céleste Palaiseau by name, was seduced by his wit and address; she loved him with all her heart, and left him only for the cloister.

He reached his twenty-seventh year and showed no sign of reforming, when he fell a victim to a low fever which kept him to his room, and then rheumatism attacked him and twisted him into knots. After several weeks of it, and as soon as he could move his legs, he thought that a little exercise would do him good, and went, hobbling on a stick, to the church of Saint-Jean-en-Grève to hear Mass. Crossing the market-place he met a doctor of his acquaintance, who was in the service of Madame de Sablé. They exchange salutes, and the doctor's civility leads him to inquiries. Scarron tells his condition, and the other says, "To-morrow morning you shall have a medicine, ready mixed, and you may rest assured that it will heal you so quickly and so completely that in two days' time you will be in perfect health again."

Next morning, sure enough, Scarron received the potion, and swallowed it. But some days after he was attacked with most atrocious sufferings, as if

every muscle were on fire. His limbs contracted, he was nailed to his seat, and could only move his hands. Violent cramps twisted his body and neck; his limbs were doubled under him, and began to shrink. As usual, the physic was blamed for the illness. The young practitioner who had administered the remedy was called such names as devil's apothecary and public poisoner. Probably the poison, if poison there were, did not come from the Faculty. Where did Scarron pick up the germ? Not, Tallemant thinks, in the pursuit of scholastic philosophy. It is quite likely that Scarron himself had no idea from what quarter he received this most disagreeable present. While all this was happening, his father, the Counsellor, had put the finishing touch on his quarrel with Richelieu in connection with the creation of some new office to which he and his colleagues Laîné, Bitaud, and Salo, refused to lend themselves. He quoted St. Paul, on this occasion, with such intemperance of speech, that thenceforth he was always known as the Apostle. The Cardinal exiled the Apostle, and relieved him of his functions. His wife, who remained in Paris, lived there in possession of her husband's property, and Abbé Scarron, as a result of this arrangement, was more annoyed than surprised to find his allowance cease.

Much worked on by his father's misfortunes, and his illness having made a poet of him, he presented a rhymed petition to Richelieu. The request was humorous in nature, and terminated in this fashion:

"Given at Paris, this day of October
By me, Scarron, by no fault of mine sober.
The year of the taking of famous Perpignan,
When, without cannon-shot, fell the town of Sedan."

The Cardinal admitted its humour, and dismissed it from his mind.

The Counsellor died at Tours, the 4th December, 1642. The worst of that was that he left nothing to his children. His twenty thousand livres of revenue had disappeared, and poor Abbé Scarron, tied to his seat, had, as an additional misfortune, to sustain a lawsuit against his stepmother, well called Madame de Plaix, the most litigious lady in the world.* And she, as he said of her, was at the right age to plead. And her suit against her husband's children was, as Dandin says, "with much licking . . . put into figure and shape."†

Affidavits, and counter-affidavits, inquisitions, expert evidence, compilations, and interlocutories—nothing was wanting. From morning to night the Sheriff's officers were serving writs on Sieur Paul Scarron, who, as defendant, entered a plea in burlesque style; the judges laughed, but refused to accept it, and Scarron had the pleasure of losing his case. As poor as Job and as sick, he was left with the care of his two sisters, Anne and Françoise, both quite unprovided for. One drank, and the other was free of her person. Neither was married. A diminutive Christian filled the house with his cries. Scarron proclaimed him his nephew, and if any showed surprise, he would add: "My nephew, as we say in the Marais." It was Françoise's child, people said, by the duc de Tresme. Charitable folk said she was secretly married to his Grace. About that I do not know, but Françoise had great wit and good humour. Saumaise says she was a *Précieuse*. In any case, philosophy was not her whole study. She had a little bitch which

* "La plus plaidoyante dame du monde." † Rabelais.

answered to the name of Guillemette. Scarron composed a burlesque epistle to Guillemette, "my sister's bitch," and proposed an *erratum*, "my sister's a bitch."

He was then living in the Rue de Douze-Portes, the Street of Twelve Doors, for which he had an affection, not because it was crooked, like himself, but because it was hard by the Place Royale. The fair ladies who walked to and fro under the arcades, fan in hand and mirror at girdle, under the gaze of their gallants, were but a few steps from the house where the paralytic lived on the second floor. In this corner of the Marais, ladies of hospitable turn were to be found, at dusk. Scarron was wont to say: "There are a dozen street walkers in the Douze-Portes, counting my two sisters as one." He would add, with a sigh, that they didn't make enough out of their lodgers. At the same time, he supported them and he would have been exceedingly angry if anyone had believed what he said about them. And he would have supported many another.

Céleste Palaiseau, who had loved him long ago, was living retired in a convent, the convent of the Conception. It went bankrupt, and Céleste found herself in the street, with her nun's veil and her bundle. She bethought her of the fine gentleman whom she had loved, and who had now neither arms nor legs. He welcomed her and took her in, and, along with her, a nun who had followed her and would not leave her. He wished well to others as to himself. To make life sweet to others, there is no need to be hard on oneself; beware of those who kill self; they will hurt you by mere misadventure. Paul Scarron was of the right sort. He loved to break bread with others. As for himself,

he made the most of the fact that his stomach was left him; and he got all the pleasure he could from it. "I make the most of what is left me," he would say, as he dispatched his viands. Like Panurge, he revelled in culinary matters. He employed his brains to fill his belly, and became a poet that he might dine, a poet of the street corner, and wholesale. At any rate, he drove his trade like a man of parts. He had a gift of writing, the art of putting market-talk into form; in fact, he had his Muse, a little snub-nosed Muse of his own. And well he knew it. Dedications were his daily bread. He praised anyone who did well by him, and my-lorded any fool who was of assistance to him. Poets did so in those days, who had to walk the gutter, and he, though he had no legs to walk with, was of the fraternity. It cost Montoron, the financier, ten thousand livres to be likened to the Emperor Augustus by Corneille. Men such as Faret, Colletet, Saint Amant, were sturdy beggars in general. They did not know the smell of roast meat every day, and one had to be an Abbé, like Furetière, Cottin, or Scarron, to have a benefice. Otherwise one was lucky to be in the pay of some seigneur. The Duc de Longueville said: "I hire Monsieur Chapelin," and Chapelin was a man very much considered, at least as a poet. How many others had to wear themselves threadbare on the benches of ante-rooms without ever being hired. A poet, a great friend of Scarron's, Sarrazin, whose wit and whose antics were at anyone's service, played the ape for the amusement of the Prince de Conti. One fine day the prince struck his poor ape with the tongs, silver tongs, and killed him. These poets, people say, had no pride. How should

they have had, when they were dying of hunger? Paul Scarron's star—a little red star—had made him burlesque poet. He who of all mortals had least occasion to laugh, could, better than any, incite laughter in others. His gaiety and his wretchedness afforded no ordinary spectacle. Scarron was the subject of universal remark. "Have you seen him?" people would say. "He is a mere trunk. He has no lower limbs." "Really?" "They put him on the table, in a crate, and he talks like a squinting magpie." "You don't mean it?" "His hat is on a cord which passes over a pulley, and he pulls it up and down when he would salute his visitors." "How extraordinary!" And a picture of him was shown, giving a back view of him, in a bowl, on the table.

His head, indeed, hung low on his chest. A head worthy of being held high, and lighted with great bright blue eyes. It was the head of a clever man, and his illness had not much spoilt it. But his body was pitifully twisted, and quite helpless. He could not use his hands. He could not brush away a fly from his nose. His sufferings were intolerable. He cried out when he was touched, he could not sleep without opiates, and he was the merriest man in the King's dominions. But sometimes he was torn with pain, and seeing himself so hideously undone, he would think of his youth, his lute playing, his dancing in the ballets, and then despair would seize him. "Were it lawful for me to make away with myself," he said one day to M. de Marigny, "I should have poisoned myself long ago." These fits of sadness would take him, and then something ludicrous would strike him, and he would laugh again. Guez de Balzac, after paying him a visit,

wrote to M. Costar: "Ill does not pierce him, it tickles him rather. I declare he is a living protest against our human weakness." Never till then had he discovered a mind that could dance reels and sarabands in a paralysed body.

There lived at Le Mans in those days a bishop who had a tender regard for his neighbour, as for himself. By a special blessing of Providence he had been enthroned bishop where, of all the dioceses of France, the capons were the fattest, the tenderest, and of the finest flavour. He did not wish death to sinners; he loved poets who knew how to live, and could shout their verses when they were merry. The bishop's board was well spread, with knowledge and good choice. His veal was from the water-meadows; his partridge must come from Auvergne; his rabbits from Roche-Guyon or Versine. And he was not less choice in the matter of his fruit. He knew but three vineyards for his wine: those of Aï, Haut-Villiers, and Avernay. Such was M. de Lavardin, who, with the Comte d'Olonne, and the Marquis de Bois-Dauphin, formed the order of the Three Vineyards. M. de Lavardin was of a nature to take pity on poor Scarron, whose means could not furnish a good table. He gave him a benefice at Le Mans. In 1643 Scarron made up his mind, not without regret, to leave the Street of the Twelve Doors, so having said good-bye to the Marais, farewell burlesque but sincere, he was carried off like a package, in the Maine coach. He stayed several years in Le Mans, where he lodged, in defiance of disciplinary statutes, in a canonical residence. There it was that, in 1644, he gave the printers his *Typhon*, a burlesque poem imitated from some Italian *Gigantea* of the sixteenth century.

In *Typhon* Olympus is made to speak the language of the market-place. It amused people, and the cripple had chosen his moment well to appear as a burlesque poet. Since the appearance of *l'Astrée* a gallantry of language was in vogue. The Hôtel de Rambouillet, which set the tone, had lent prevalence to an elevated diction exceedingly ill-suited to the needs of humanity in this sublunary world. A certain gentleman was badly looked on who had let fall the word *avoine*—hay—in a cultivated circle in the Rue St. Thomas du Louvre—it seems that it was a vulgar word. The gentleman lost all patience, swore outrageously, and ran off to Scarron, so the tale goes, to talk at his ease. Spanish pomposity put the finishing touch to the absurdity of poets, and all sense departed from them. All their speech was of "matamores" and "capitans." The stage afforded room for none but amorous heroes. And when a hero sighed, whether for a shepherdess or for a princess, the wind of his sighs bent the trees of the country-side, and there were no bright eyes but they were suns.

This bombast affected the town, and swashbuckler airs were all the wear in society. "I kindle an arquebus oftener than a light," said the poet, Georges de Scudéry. And Cyrano de Bergerac told how he had, one fine day at the Porte de Nesle, put a hundred men to flight. At a later day old Corneille, recalling the shining past, revives the style of his youth and says in a couplet which outdoes it:

> "Quelque ravage affreux que cause ici la peste,
> L'absence aux vrais amants est encor plus funeste"*

* "Whatever havoc dire the pestilence may spread
True love in absence finds a misery more dread."

This note is difficult to sustain, and is not well suited to workaday existence. Scarron made his heroes talk like carters. People took note that heroes had some common sense after all, which was a great comfort.

While he was writing in this vulgar strain and living on the best of poultry at the expense of the Church, Scarron came in the way of a lady of high birth who was to be of use to him. Marie de Hautefort, separated from the Queen, to whose service she had been but too loyal, was living with her younger brother and her sister d'Escars, on a family estate. This wise and fair Marie, innocent heroine, turned her adorable blue eyes on the helpless poet. She felt pity for him, and took interest in him. His burlesque verse by no means displeased her, and the poet wrote to her freely.

A sorry troop of players came to Le Mans while Scarron was there. A booth was lighted up and comedies were given. The company made some stir in the place; there was the usual pursuit of princesses, gallants receiving cuffs, emptying of bottles, exchange of blows, and kisses, and bad jokes. The cripple delighted in their stuff, and got enough out of it to make a book. He even wrote something for the players. In 1646 he contributed two plays to French drama: he created Jodelet. He was not wanting in the comic vein, and could develop a character.

Scarron left his canonical residence in 1646 and returned to Paris, whither his ills faithfully bore him company. In his own words, he held his marquisate of Quinet. Nicolas Quinet, it must be said, sworn bookseller on the steps of the Sainte-Chapelle, and near the shop of Nicolas Barbin, sold

Scarron's works. But this literary marquisate did not bring him much. Happily, Madame de Hautefort was recalled to Court.

At Court, men of letters easily found office and employment. The Queen, who stood above noble and bourgeois, was without that contempt for people of low birth which filled the lords and ladies of Lilliput looking down from their cock lofts. Voiture, the son of a wine-merchant, was ambassadorial usher to Monsieur, the King's brother, gentleman-in-waiting to Madame, and acting steward of the household. But what office could be found for a poet who was not even capable of scratching his own nose?

Scarron, who was never at a loss in framing a petition, found what he wanted. Wheeled to the Louvre, and presented to the Queen by Madame de Hautefort, he asked Her Majesty to appoint him her official invalid. The Queen smiled. He took the smile for the gift, and then and there solicited, on the strength of his new appointment, to be lodged in the Louvre. "Here is an admirable opportunity for your Majesty," he said, "to found a hospital at small expense, for all the ills a hospital treats are here present in my single person." He did not get his lodging, but he got a pension. And Mazarin, though little affected by the pretty things the poet had written about him, gave him in addition a yearly five hundred écus.

Unfortunately, there were troublous times at hand.

Mazarin was detested by the people of Paris. His slippery ways only earned him contempt, and rebellion was in the air. On May 13th, 1648, Parliament refused to register a fiscal decree.

The late messire Paul Scarron, once Counsellor to the Upper Chamber, must have thrilled with joy in his tomb. Had he been alive on the 26th August of the same year, he would undoubtedly have got himself arrested after the *Te Deum* along with goodman Broussel. Next day, the 27th, Paris was bristling with barricades, and Mazarin was in flight. The Fronde had broken out. No one knew where the word came from, but the word was in every mouth. To be a Frondeur was to be a bold bad fellow, who beat the watch and played the young blood about the town, and the Parisians were charmed to be Frondeurs. Scarron, a Parisian if ever there was one, sat on his stool and sniffed the odour of revolt coming up from the street. He heard the drivers on the highway hitting their horses and shouting, "Gee-up, Mazarin!" And he, too, shared the public enthusiasm, and was an ardent Frondeur even in his bowl. Had there been a copy of *Typhon* lying about still, on his table, he might have read the homage he had formerly lavished on the Cardinal:

> "Jules yet greater than Julius the Great,
> Alcide on whom an Atlas well may lean."

But Jules had ceased to pay. Scarron was not of the ungrateful kind, but he was scatter-brained. And his house was the head-quarters of the day's gossip. The Fronde itself came in after dinner hours. The Coadjutor—no need to say more—came daily to visit him, in company with Marigny, abbé of the Court, lobbyist, and great Frondeur. The most telling squibs against Mazarin would be read over. First the *Mazarinade* appeared, and it was followed by thousands of lesser mazarinades under divers

titles. The first squib, which spread everywhere, acquainted ladies and lackeys alike of the *amours* of Mazarin and a fruit-seller of Alcala, and with the drubbing Mazarin got in the affair. To wear the purple and yet have suffered for the charms of a fair fruiterer is one thing; but the pamphleteer had it that the Cardinal had dispatched Barillon, by means of a drug, to another world.

It was said, and widely repeated, that Scarron wrote the *Mazarinade*. Mazarin believed it, and though he was seldom angry, he was this time. The Fronde buzzed around the cripple's chair. Jokes came fresh and fast: *What ten millions think, and More;* the *Burlesque News of the War in Paris;* the *Juliade;* the *Bird's Song*, and the *Triolets* of Saint-Amant. The *triolets*, turned in masterly fashion, fairly bristled with points, directed at Cyrano de Bergerac, who had a tender skin. Cyrano thought they were Scarron's, and the poor invalid found a redoubtable enemy in the royalist camp. Cyrano, a brave man and temperate, had killed his ten men in the duel. His face bore undeniable witness to his exploits, and his long nose was notably scarred, and bore as many scores marked on it as the planks whereon the bakers notch their credits with their knives. An enemy of Cyrano de Bergerac was as good as dead, but Scarron could not go out with any man. What figure would he have cut, he, sitting on a cushion, in a bowl, against a threatening rapier? And how could one kill so sick a man? Cyrano would have given much to have seen him as strong as a Turk. The thing enraged him, and, as there was nothing left him but his pen, he wielded that with fury. He gave large scope to his quarrel, needless to say. He addressed himself to Paris at

large, and pointed to Scarron as the scapegoat loaded with its political sins. And, like a good royalist, he called on the Frondeurs to do penance.

"Seditious generation, flock ye to see a sight worthy the justice of God; Scarron the horrible is held up to you as an example of the pains of hell that all shall suffer who forget, betray, and calumniate their princes. Come, ye burlesque writers, and behold a whole hospital of ills in the body of your Apollo; does not such a sight move you to penitence? Admire the wonderful designs of Providence, who knew that the ingratitude of the Parisians would declare itself against their King in one thousand six hundred and forty-nine; but sparing so many victims, brought to the birth forty years beforehand, a man whose disloyalty made it meet that he should expiate in his single person the sins of an entire City."

"Ten years since did Fate twist his neck, yet could not strangle him. To see him with his twisted arms hanging petrified at his side you might take his corpse for a gibbet whereon the devil had hanged a soul. And what a soul! More hideous than his body!"

Scarron laughed heartily on reading such prose, which did not come up to his own. As for Saint-Amant, he lay low. He was still chafing his ribs, for he had recently been beaten on the Pont-Neuf by the Prince de Condé's footmen, for a song he had written. But by songs it was that the war was carried on, this petty war, of women, and magistrates and abbés, of lord and burgess, whose squabbles grew more complicated every day, until no one knew what it was all about. People grew sick of it. The King made solemn entry into his good city of

Paris on 21st October, and Mazarin joined him there not long after, silently, on tip-toe, as an Italian would. He only asked for sufferance till he achieved omnipotence, which he quickly did. And who had his nose mightily put out of joint, if not our poor poet? Little desirous of adding the style of Martyr of the Republic to his other calamities, he now foreswore Gondi, Montpensier, Longueville and the whole Fronde, and abjured his disastrous errors before all and sundry. He charitably invited his accomplices to do the same. He said it, and he sang it:

"We must humble us again,
Miserere we must sing,
Frondeurs, ye are foolish men;
We must humble us again,
What this word, bethink you, then.
Sling* is much the same as swing;
We must humble us again,
Miserere we must sing."

He made poetical appeal in gentlest terms to Mazarin's ear:

"Jules, once the mark for satire all unjust."

But Jules turned a deaf ear, and the repentant poet did not regain his pension. Happily for him he obtained one of sixteen thousand livres from Fouquet.

Since he was no longer the Queen's official invalid, he was at liberty to seek cure. He availed himself of the chance. He heard great things of the tripe-baths of the Hospital of Charity, on the Faubourg St. Germain, and he took lodgings in the Rue des Saints-Pères, at the Hôtel de Troyes. A travelling

* Fronde=sling.

hospital, he now had himself born every morning to his gelatinous bath, from which, however, he always emerged as sick as he entered it. At the Hôtel de Troyes he became intimate with a neighbour, a Madame de Neuillant, aged, ailing, miserly, and devout. She had a god-daughter, the prettiest little person ever seen, just back from America with her mother. Scarron wanted to see her, not only because she was pretty, but because she had been to the Indies, where he thought of going himself.

Yes, this man who was riveted to his seat, was resolved to set out for the New World. What will one not attempt in hope of health? Scarron believed that a tropical sun would work his conversion to normal manhood. A certain Commandeur de Poincy put this wild idea into his head. This Poincy had come from Martinique, where he had left behind him, according to his tale, his gout and his rheumatism. He strongly advised Scarron to go and look for his arms and legs in the West Indies, where he promised him he should find them. About the year 1651 a company was formed to establish a Colony at Cayenne. Seven or eight hundred colonists were to go out. Scarron put three thousand livres into the undertaking, and was inscribed on the list of colonists.

Had the intended voyage been a joke, it might have been reckoned among the most outrageous of the many jokes that originated in that queer, droll headpiece. But Scarron, odd to say, did not laugh at all. He was going to Cayenne; it was determined on.

He wrote his friend Sarrazin the following letter:

"A vile destiny takes me, a month from now,

to the West Indies. I have invested a thousand écus in this new company which is to found a colony three degrees from the Line, on the banks of the Orillana and the Orinoco. Good-bye to France! Good-bye to Paris! Good-bye to all tigresses disguised as angels! Good-bye to Ménage, Sarrazin, Marigny! I renounce all burlesque verse, comedies, and comic romance, for a country where there will be no cant, no wolves in sheep's clothing, no Inquisition, no winter to attempt my life, no coughs and colds to rend me, no wars to starve me to death."

The excellent Céleste Palaiseau was of the company. But Scarron had no intention of marrying her in the New World. The traitor had, as we shall see, other views.

Ninon, the great Ninon, was to go with them. Such is the simple truth. A first batch embarked in the middle of May, 1652. But neither Scarron nor Ninon, nor even Céleste Palaiseau, was among them.

About this period, as I have said, Madame de Neuillant's god-daughter, Francine d'Aubigne, lately from America with her mother, was living opposite Scarron's house. Madame de Neuillant, who visited Scarron, took with her to see him the youthful Francine, who made her entry in tears, for her dress was too short, and she did not know what to do or what to say in the presence of a fashionable poet. Scarron looked at the young woman with the eye of a connoisseur; he saw that she was pretty, that she had intelligence and sense, and a good head on her shoulders: he knew she was poor; he made up his mind to save her from the convent, to marry her, and take her with him.

He was well aware that he was but the simulacrum of a husband, but he judged that his house, wherever it might be, was better far than the cloister for a young woman of parts.

Her tale, which she told him with much grace, was the tale of a poor child who had all too much complaint to make against mankind and the world. Francine d'Aubigné was granddaughter to that Theodore Agrippa who was such a sturdy fighter in his day; a man of resource, wielding a good blade and a good pen; a sad dog, without fear or scruple, a poet and a ruffian, an honour to letters and a public nuisance, one of the last of the little tyrants of feudal France; not so Huguenot as was made out, and traitor more than a bit; but with his outbursts of bluff righteousness which lent him something of the antique cast, as of a hero out of Plutarch.

His son, Constant, was much like him, but of less worth. He did his best to carry matters as his father did before him, with boldness, or with cunning; but times were changed. Richelieu, who, as we have seen, had a heavy hand then on Parliament, was not the man to let France suffer at the hands of ruffians of however noble lineage. Constant, who, while remaining a gentleman, was murderer, perjurer, and forger, went to prison at Niort, and there he stayed. There, no longer young, but of good appearance, though of evil manners, he easily seduced Jeanne de Cardilhac, the daughter of the prison governor. As he had taken her, they needs must give her or rather leave her to him. He married her in due course, and she gave him a daughter without delay.

Francine, then, was born in the gaol at Niort, November 27th, 1635. The prisoner was released

at a later date, and left his native land, where he could not obtain free play for his talents, and took ship for Martinique. On the voyage, little Francine was so ill that she was taken for dead. They were about to sew her in a length of bunting and throw her overboard, and the fuse was already lighted for the minute gun to mark her ocean-funeral. Her mother took her last look of her, but cried out as she embraced the child, "She is not dead!" The child stirred, and opened her eyes. Jeanne de Cardilhac, whom life had hardened, showed small tenderness for the child she loved. Francine learned to read out of a big Plutarch, and no smile ever lightened her task. Constant d'Aubigné died at Martinique.

The child, brought back to France, was put under the care of an aunt, Madame de Villette. It was an interval of sunshine in the shadow of her young days. Peace reigned on the Château de Murçay, and modesty, charity, and pure happiness. Daily would Francine, taking her stand at the drawbridge, distribute alms to the beggars with her little hands. But Madame de Villette was a Calvinist, and Madame de Neuillant, to make interest for herself with the pious Queen, Anne of Austria, withdrew the child from her Huguenot aunt, and took her into her own house in order to convert her. There, with the avaricious god-mother, Francine, fair as the dawn, suffered the lot of a Cinderella. She was sent to the farm-yard. Every morning, masked against the sun to preserve her complexion, a straw hat on her head, a sapling in hand and a basket on her arm, she went out to tend the turkeys. In her little basket she carried her bread and a volume of Pibrac's quatrains. She might not touch the

bread until she had mastered five quatrains of Pibrac, who is the most wearisome mortal that ever plied a pen. She starved while she was with Madame de Neuillant, who, having converted her to Catholicism and so provided her with the bread of angels, disdained for her any grosser food.

Scarron was a compassionate being. He pitied Francine, admired her beauty, and esteemed her talents; she could think, and express herself on paper, and wrote very good letters. The wily Scarron offered her an allowance sufficient to enable her to enter a convent, and she was very sensible of the obligation, for the cloister grating seemed less forbidding to her than the countenance of Madame de Neuillant. But one day he said abruptly that he could make no provision for such purpose. She knew not what to reply and was silent. "The fact is," he went on, "I want to marry you." He gave her two days to think it over, and after the two days she said "Yes." When the contract was prepared, he declared in the presence of the notary, that he acknowledged the receipt, with his bride, of a portion of four louis yearly, two big and mischievous eyes, a fine figure, a pair of white hands, and a lively mind. The notary asked what he, in turn, accorded. "Immortality," said the poet. The bride borrowed her dress from a friend for the wedding. It took place in May, 1652, in a country church. I do not know whether it was Scarron or the Curé who exacted a fresh abjuration of heresy from the young convert. Scarron may well have been taken with an attack of piety. Some of his friends may have smelled of heresy, but as for him, who had come nigh starvation through having libelled the Cardinal, he had

neither the money nor the courage to fall out with Heaven.

They set up house, this young thing as fair as the morning, and this poor trunk of a burlesque poet, in a dwelling near the postern-gate at the end of the narrow Rue des Deux-Portes. The house, which belonged to a Sieur Bussine, was new, with a façade of stone and brick. The Scarrons lived on the second floor, up twenty-four stairs. They had two rooms looking on to the street, and separated by the staircase. The poet lodged on the right-hand side, his wife on the left. Down in the small court-yard was the kitchen, and the abode of Mangin, their factotum, *valet de chambre*, lackey, secretary, and scourge of the household. Mangin was of a disposition to make a saint swear. So we may imagine how he made his master swear who was no saint, and could, on occasion, blaspheme to much purpose.

Scarron could see the hospital of Saint-Gervais from his window, as he lay in his long grey chair writing, on the board that served him for a table, some passage of his *Virgile Travesti* or his *Roman Comique*. His appointments were not without a certain magnificence; for he indulged his eyes even as he did his palate, seeking whatever pleasures he could still enjoy. He loved pictures, and had some fine ones, notably a *Bacchanal* and an *Exaltation of St. Paul* which Poussin had sent him from Rome at his request. But the painter had no taste for burlesque, and had but a poor opinion of a talent so far from noble. Scarron had, too, a portrait of his wife, that Mignard, his neighbour in the Rue des Tournelles, had painted on the spot.

Being paralysed, he was obliged to have a salon, which was not usual for a man of letters at that

date. While Julie d'Angennes gathered the wits and the *précieuses* in her cultivated salon in the Rue Saint-Thomas du Louvre, Scarron kept his intellectual exchange, and saw a very mixed society in his room, but a society not wanting in pretty women or in men of merit. Gilt coaches would draw up before the house. Thither would come Vivonne, du Lude, Grammont, Mortemart, Coligny, Riney, d'Elbène, Villarceaux, all these, to see this rare man. Their host was not flattered to the extent of losing his head, by all the honour paid him: "These grand gentlemen," said he, "come to see me as they might go to see the elephant, and pass the afternoon in my room when they have nothing better to do." The literary world came on foot. Sometimes Faret, with Saint-Amant; they came perhaps from the *Épée-royale*, and were going on to the *Fosse-aux-Lions;* or at another time d'Harcourt, a gentleman who affected the Muse, and was recognized as a glutton. One day there would come Saint-Pavin, who kept an Abbey of Thelema at his Abbey of Sivry; on another, the grand-prior Jacques de Louvre, a man who dined well, and supped better. Five or six of them, in fact, who having small hope in any other world, made the best of this. Abbé Boisrobert, another familiar, was the senior of the party. A bush that advertised good wine saw him pass under oftener than did the church-porch. Madame Cornuel said that Boisrobert's chasuble was made out of one of Ninon's robes. We can imagine the uproar there was when all these free-lances got together, and Paul Scarron was shouting with them. Well did the cripple say, before his marriage, in speaking of his bride to be:

"I will do her no harm, but I will teach her much."

Conversation would be more polite, no doubt, when it was conducted by Segrais, Balzac, and Saint-Évremond, men of parts and of decent life. As for the women who would come and sit by Madame Scarron, on the little yellow satin-covered bed, they all had their recommendations, though these were diverse. They were, chiefly, Madame de la Suze, Madame de la Sablière, Madame de Sévigne, Ninon, and Marion.

Ninon found pleasure in talking with Madame Scarron, but did not think that she was subject for love, and Ninon knew. Saint-Évremond asks without discretion whether the pretty Francine. . . . "I cannot say, I have not seen anything," says the charitable gossip, "but I have often lent my room to her and Villarceaux." Villarceaux hotly denies it. "I should as soon think of making impertinent proposals to the Queen as to that woman," he says. And Tallemant himself says nothing against her. "Madame Scarron," he says, "is received by all. So far she is not believed to have made a false step." M. de Charleval, who worships her, will not lead her to make it.

This facile rhymester pays his court to the ladies and to the Muses, but does not get far in either suit. Scarron says of this gentleman of loves and madrigals that the Muses feed him on nothing stronger than blanc-mange and chicken broth. Here is the style of thing he writes to Francine:

> "Warm friendship may blow to a flame,
> And I think 'twere no case for surprise
> Did the friend of a beautiful dame
> A lover soon prove in disguise"

M. de Charleval is fickle, and it was but a few days before that he had written, from the shady recess of his park, to another fair lady who had complained of his absence:

> "Where the brook murmurs shady banks between
> Stretched on the flowers I rest, and breathe in bliss;
> Not for a kingdom would I quit the scene,
> But I would quit it, Iris, for a kiss."

Meanwhile our cripple was in gallant commerce with Madame de Sévigné. After the death of the Marquis, he sent complimentary condolences to the fair widow. He spoke with regret of not seeing her again before he should die. The Marquise replied that on her return from Les Rochers she would go and see him, and would he be so good as not to die till then. The poet made answer that with every care for his health he was dying of impatience to see her. She came, and let him kiss her beautiful arms, "which she did not offer at prohibitive price," says her cousin.

Madame Scarron behaved with all prudence and reserve in the mixed world in which she found herself. Like a strong-minded woman she restored order and good usage where it was wanted, and recalled her queer spouse to decent ways. She let a touch of the prude appear in her when timely, for had she shown less coldness she would soon have been no better than a tavern-wench, like Colletet's Claudine.

At midday the table was spread in the poet's room, and he permitted many people to bring their own dinner. Madame Scarron was put to the blush by this practice. One day in came the Marquis de Lude with the joint. He and the husband ate it together, but the lady retired to her own room.

The guests, all more or less pagans, would often eat meat in Lent. Madame Scarron would have none of it, and sat down to a herring and salad.

All the same, as she had but five hundred francs a year for housekeeping, she did not refuse the offerings in kind that came from all parts, for Scarron would receive *pâtés*, fowls, cheeses, firewood, books, etc. For these he paid in verses, which were reckoned good money, for he was a famous man now. Madame de Scudéry had put him into her *Clelie*, under the name of *Scaurus*, along with the illustrious. His *Virgile Travesti*, which had appeared in 1648, was the delight of Paris and the Provinces. It has a flock of imitators, who travestied Lucan or Ovid.

Scarron, who had common sense as well as the literary, did not altogether share the admiration he inspired: "All these travesties," said he, "and my own *Virgile* not least, are mere foolishness. Maybe the master minds who are paid to keep our language sound and undefiled"—he meant the fee-hunting Academicians—"will see to it. Perhaps the condemnation of the first joker convicted of being an inveterate parodist and sentenced, as such, to hard labour for life on the Pont-Neuf, will disperse the mischief-working storm-clouds that threaten the domain of Apollo." It was magnanimous to rank himself with his insipid followers. His *Virgile Travesti* is very amusing. Balzac admired it as an example of light, open mockery. And if Boileau, young but already austere, passed a sour censure on a comic vein which consisted in anachronism and in the lending to the gods and heroes of antiquity the manners of the Porte-Saint-Nicolas and of the fish-market, he secretly confessed

that the opening of the *Virgile Travesti* was very agreeable reading. At a later day, the noble-minded Racine, who could so well enter into the Æneid of the Mantuan, read that of our Parisian and laughed with all his heart. All the same, the true and lasting talent of Scarron lay elsewhere. It came out in his *Roman Comique* and in his *Nouvelles*, his prose. The *Roman Comique* which was inspired by that troop of players who performed their comedies at Le Mans when Scarron was living there in the Canon's house, began to appear in 1651. It consists of a series of adventures mingled with a tale of love. The book was left unfinished, and we shall never know whether Destin marries l'Étoile, or Léandre, Angélique. But what matter. The tale is full of character and situations. It is the work of a man gay and good of heart; it is of those things that are true and eternal.

As to the *Nouvelles-tragi-comiques*, imitated from the Spanish for the most part, they are Scarron's by their play of style. Molière did wisely to dip into the buffoon's store. He made some lucky dips, for his *Tartuffe*, into a novel entitled the *Punishment of Avarice*. Both pieces, the issue of a master-pen, are singularly free and firm in the handling. Scarron's prose is an excellent prose, full, robust, founded on good models and of frank appeal.

His contemporaries felt all this confusedly, and a rumour of fame reached the poor sick creature. But he continued indigent and hard driven. Creditors often knocked rudely at his bolted door, and raised outcry in the street. The poet was once hemmed round with hostile faces. Three thousand francs, sent by Fouquet, Pelisson being

the intermediary, came in the nick of time to raise the siege.

Madame Scarron was in favour with the wife of the *Surintendant;* she obtained for her husband the job of forming a body of controllers of goods unloaded at the city barriers. The carriers, no doubt, could have done very well without the controllers who checked them, but the weakly poet, who was overseer to these lusty fellows, got, by their help, a revenue of two or three thousand francs. And he had another resource. His marriage had obliged him to resign his prebendary at Le Mans, but he still drew his thousand ecus, for he had passed it on to his henchman, Girault, who was body servant to Menage. He was suffering more cruelly than ever. He doubled and trebled his dose of opium, but could not sleep. Would he never sleep? Thinking in what manner rest would at length come to him, he composed his epitaph:

"He who here now sleep beneath
Roused more pity than ill will,
Living suffered many a death
Ere life left him still
Pass, O friend, with footfall light,
Lest he wake—'twould be too bad
Should you break the first good night
Scarron ever had"

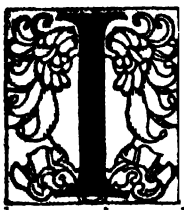
Came autumn, and with autumn rain, gloom, and the melancholy sighing of the wind in the trees of Saint-Gervais. What he suffered is incredible. At last came a hiccough, a fatal sign. "What a satire will I write," said he, "on this hiccough, if I get over it." He commended his wife to his executor, M. d'Elbene. Another d'Elbène had held him at the font. He said to

Francine: "Farewell—think of me sometimes. I leave you penniless, and, though virtue is little to live on, I am well assured that virtue will always be yours."

He died on October 6th, 1660, in his lodging in the Rue Neuve-Saint-Louis, in the Marais. He was fifty years of age, and had been married for four years. He was laid to rest in the vaults of the church of Saint-Gervais.

ON THE LANGUAGE OF LA FONTAINE

"Le maniement et emploite des beaux esprits donne prix a la langue, non pas l'innovant tant, comme la remplissant de plus vigoreux et divers services, l'estirant et ployant."*



T is Montaigne who speaks, Montaigne who was of the number of those "beaux esprits." And true it is that a language gets its scope and strength at the hands of the great writers. They draw on the popular source, but their genius makes new disposition of common treasure. And so with La Fontaine; his language is a fruitful subject of study. And it has been much studied. His Fables have been illustrated with note, gloss and vocabulary by many a scholar.

M. Théodore Lorin furnished, in 1852, a *Vocabulaire pour les Œuvres de La Fontaine*. The book was put together without much method, and must not be consulted too confidently. M. Marty-Laveaux made it the subject of a judicious notice in 1853, in the *Bibliotheque de l'École des Chartes*, and his notice amounts to a critical essay of considerable range on the language of La Fontaine. I wish to indicate, to such as are curious of style, the more instructive peculiarities of the style of the Fables. I shall weigh words, but such words

* "The handling and utterance of fine wits is that which sets off language; not so much by innovating, as by putting it to more vigorous and various services, and by straining, bending, and adapting it to them." (Montaigne, Bk. III, cap. 5 Cotton's translation.)

are golden, and the goldsmith's balance cannot be too exact, nor his touchstone too sensitive.

La Fontaine loved words and could choose them. Only on this condition can a man be a writer. Words are ideas. Just reasoning demands a rigorous syntax, and exact vocabulary. I cannot but think that the foremost people of the world will be found in possession of the best syntax. It often happens that men cut each other's throats for the sake of words not understood. Did they understand one another they would fall on each other's necks. Nothing advances the spirit of humanity more than a good dictionary, such as Littré, which explains everything. But to our subject.

I shall have no difficulty in pointing out the sources of La Fontaine's language. These are to be found in the old tale-tellers and poets; in the Queen of Navarre, in Bonaventure des Périers, in Amyot, in Montaigne, in Marot, in Rabelais. And the last of these as Budée says, "was profound in his knowledge, and most various in his practice, of the writer's art."

La Fontaine is full of Rabelais. *Pantagruel* is the chosen fountain-head. He draws from it without stint.

There he finds the names of his beasts and men: Jean Chouart, Dindenaut, l'Agnelet, Robin Mouton, etc.

Jean Chouart, who, in Rabelais, is a gold-beater at Montpellier, becomes in the Fables "Messire Jean Chouart, le curé qui sur son mort comptoit."*

* "Proprement toute notre vie
Est le curé Chouart qui sur son mort comptoit
Et la fable du pot au lait."

(*Fables*, VII, 11.)

"The Pot of Milk and fate
Of Curate Cabbagepate
As emblems, do but give
The history of most that live."

(Wright's translation.)

Perrin Dendin, says Rabelais, is "un home honorable, bon labourer, bien chantant au lutrain, homme de credit et aage."*

"Cestuy home de bien apoinctoit plus de procés qu'il n'en estoit vuide en tout le palais de Poictiers, en l'auditoire de Monsmorillon, en la halle de Parthenay le Vieulx."†

The *Perrin Dendin* of the Fables compounds no process; he would have been sorry to, he sits in judgment, and you know how he disposes of the suitors.

"Perrin, fort gravement, ouvre l'huitre et la gruge"‡

Perrin Dendin, in Racine's *Plaideurs*, is a judge who is always a judge, and condemns his own dog to the galleys.

As for *Rominagrobis*, we see that he is "un homo, et vieulx et poete."§

But his name, Raminagrobis or Rominagrobis, is older than he, and signifies an imposing person muffled in ermine. And so it may apply to a cat as

* "A very honest man, careful labourer of the ground, fine singer in a church desk, of good repute and credit, and older than the most aged of all your worships" (Urquhart, Bk III cap 41)

† "This honest man compounded, attoned and agreed more differences, controversies, and variances at law than had been determined, voided, and finished during his time in the whole palace of Poictiers, in the auditory of Monsmorillon, and in the town house of old Parthenay" (Urquhart, *ibid*)

‡ "Sir Nincom with a solemn face
Took up the oyster and the case,
In opening both, the first he swallowed
And, in due time, his judgment followed
(*Fables*, IX, 9 Wright's translation)

§ "A man, old, and a poet"

well as to a doctor of laws. And a cat it is to whom Voiture applies it.

"Les plus beaux chats d'Espagne ne sont que des chats brûlés auprix de lui, et Rominagrobis même (vous savez bien, Madame, que Rominagrobis est prince des chats) ne saurait avoir meilleure mine."*

Rominagrobis, in La Fontaine, is likewise a cat, and well furred, who is consulted in cases of litigation, for he is cat who wears ermine.

"Rapportons-nous, dit-elle, a Rominagrobis."†

Rodilard is quite another cat (for there are cats and cats). This one is a fighter. Poor Panurge is very frightened at the sight of him, "remuant les babines . . . tremblant et claquetant des dens."‡

He reappears as terrible as ever in the verse of the Fables.

"Un chat nommé *Rodilardus*
Faisait des rats telle déconfiture
Que l'on n'en voyoit presque plus."§

"Attacher un grelot au cou de Rodillard."‖

* "The finest cats that Spain can show are but singed cats alongside him, and Rominagrobis himself (and, as you know, Madame, Rominagrobis is a prince of cats) could cut no finer figure." (Voiture, quoted by Littré.)

† ". . . let's drop dispute
And go before Rominagrobis,
Who'll judge not only in this suit
But tell us truly whose the globe is."
(*Fables*, VII, 15. Wright.)

‡ "Waggling his chaps . . . trembling and with his teeth chattering." (*Pantagruel*, IV, 7. W. F. Smith.)

§ "Old Rodilard, a certain cat,
Such havoc of the rats had made
'Twas difficult to find a rat
With Nature's debt unpaid."
(*Fables*, II, 2. Wright.)

‖ "To bell the fatal cat."—(*Fables*, II, 2. Wright.)

Both forms, *Rodilardus* and *Rodilard*, are found in the same chapter of *Pantagruel*.

Dindenaut, the sheep-dealer in *Pantagruel*, boasts his sheep:

"Ce n'est viande que pour roys et princes, dit-il a Panurge. La chair est tant delicate, tant savoureuse et tant friande que c'est basme (baume)"*

La Fontaine speaks of two fellows who promise great things of a bear "whose skin is worth a fortune," and goes on:

"Dindenaut prisoit moins ses moutons qu'eux leur ours"†

Thibault l'Aignelet is the shepherd in the farce of Pathelin. They think him stupider than his sheep, but he is too much for the craftiest lawyer.

Thibault l'Aignelet is in Rabelais, also, a shepherd of sheep.

"Reste-il icy, dist Panurge, ulle âme moutonnière? Ou sont ceux de *Thibault l'aignelet?*"‡

Thibault l'Agnelet, in La Fontaine, is a simple sheep, eaten by the wolf.

"*Thibault l'agnelet* passera
Sans qu'a la broche je le mette"§

* "... They are meat for none but Kings and Princes their flesh is so delicate, so savoury and so dainty, that it is like Balm" (*Pantagruel*, IV, 7 W. F. Smith)

† "Old Dindenaut, in sheep who dealt,
Less prized his sheep than they their pelt"
(*Fables*, V, 20 Wright)

‡ "Panurge said: Remaineth there here any other sheepish soul? Where be those of Thibault the Lamb and Regnault Ram?" (*Pantagruel*, IV, 8. W. F. Smith)

§ "... The lamb the best-looking
Without any cooking,
I'll strangle. . . ."—(*Fables*, X, 6 Wright)

Dindenaut, she sheep-stealer we have met already, says to Panurge:

"Vous avez nom *Robin Mouton*. Voyez ce mouton-là, il a nom Robin comme vous. Robin. Robin. Robin."*

La Fontaine's shepherd laments with tears:

"Ils m'ont laissé ravir pauvre Robin
Robin Mouton qui par la ville
Me suivoit pour un peu de pain."†

Robin Mouton is brother to Thibault l'Agnelet.

There is another personage who figures in Rabelais and in La Fontaine; and that is *Messer Gaster*, the belly in person. In *Pantagruel* we learn:

"Comment Pantagruel descendit en (au) manoir de messere Gaster, premier maistre es ars du monde." ‡

Rabelais remembered his *Persius*:

"Magister artis, ingeniique largitor venter."§

But Rabelais gives us Messer Gaster in person, and pushes the allegory far. As he goes on he recalls the apologue of the members who conspired against the belly. La Fontaine, when he treats this, one of

* "Do you see that sheep there? His name is Robin, like yours. Robin, Robin, Robin. . . . Ba, Ba, Ba." (*Pantagruel*, IV, 8. W. F. Smith.)

† ". . . They've let poor Robin fall a prey,
Ah, woe! the day!
Poor Robin Wether lying dead!
He followed for a bit of bread
His master through the crowded City. . . ."
(*Fables*, IX, 19. Wright.)

‡ "How Pantagruel went ashore at the abode of Messer Gaster, first Master of Arts in the world." (*Pantagruel*, IV, 57.)

§ "The master of all arts, the bountiful giver of genius, the belly." (*Persius*. Evans.)

Æsop's subjects, does not fail to use Rabelais' name for the belly.

"Je devois par la royauté
Avoir commencé mon ouvrage
A la voir d'un certain coste,
Messer Gaster en est l'image" *

And the fabulist informs, in a marginal note, such of his readers who do not "Pantagruelize," that Messer Gaster is the stomach.

One may pick out some further expressions that La Fontaine has borrowed from the same source In the *Jardinier et son Seigneur* (the Gardener and his Master), which is, properly speaking, a tale, and a very good tale, you will probably have noticed the forcible phrase: *se rue en cuisine*. It relates to a certain squire who comes to the gardener's with his huntsmen, after a rabbit: all the chickens in the farmyard are slain in his honour.

"On fricasse, *on se rue en cuisine*" †

One detects Rabelais, and indeed we find in him:

"Il rue en cuisine. J'en viens, tout y va par escuelles" ‡

There are two more expressions of La Fontaine's that are to be found in Rabelais:

"Vostre serviteur Gille,
Cousin et gendre de Bertrand,
Singe du pape en son vivant,

* "Perhaps, had I but shown due loyalty,
This book would have begun with royalty,
Of which, in certain points of view,
Boss Belly is the image true"
(*Fables*, III, 2. Wright)

† "Meanwhile in the kitchen what bustling and cooling (*Fables*, IV, 4. Wright)

‡ ". . he revels in the kitchen: that is where I come from; everything there goes by bucketsful" (*Pantagruel* IV, 10 W F Smith.)

Tout fraîchement en cette ville
Arrive en trois basteaux, exprés pour vous parler." *

So speaks the monkey, Gille, showing off at the fair. He can be no understrapper who comes in three ships: Gille, in throwing off this verbal flourish, is thinking of Gargantua's mare:

" En ceste mesme saison, Fayoles, quart roy de Numidie, envoya du pays de Africque à Grandgousier une jument la plus énorme et la plus grande que feut oncques veue, et la plus monstrueuse. . . . Et fut amencé par mer *en troys carraques et un brigantin*, jusques au port de Olone en Thalmondoys."†

At first sight it seems extraordinary that a wasp should *lécher l'ours*—lick a bear into shape; but the wasp being a judge, the thing is readily explicable, in a figurative sense. It refers to the wasp before whom the honey-bees plead their cause. A bee complains of the slowness of the procedure:

" Depuis tantost six mois que la cause est pendante
Nous voici comme aux premiers jours.
Pendant cela le miel se gaste.
Il est temps désormais que le juge se haste;
N'a-t-il pas assez *léché l'ours*? " ‡

* " Your humble servant, Monsieur Gille,
The son-in-law to Tickleville,
Pope's monkey, and of great renown,
Is now just freshly come to town,
Arrived in three *bateaux*, express."
(*Fables*, IX, 3. Wright.)

† " In the same season, Fayolles, the fourth King of Numidia, sent out of the country of Africa, to Grandgousier, the most hideously great mare that ever was seen, and of the strangest form; . . . she was brought by sea in three carricks and a brigantine to the harbour of Olone in Thalmondois." (*Gargantua*, 16. Urquhart.)

‡ " At last exclaimed a bee of sense,
'We've laboured months in this affair
And now are only where we were;'
Meanwhile the honey runs to waste:'
Has he not licked the bear enough?"
(*Fables*, I, 21. Wright.)

The prudent bee who thus delivers himself has learnt in *Pantagruel* how a lawsuit "is perfected" according to the doctrine of Bridlegoose. The excellent Bridlegoose explains this doctrine by means of a figure of speech, likening a lawsuit to a bear:

"Un procès, à sa naissance première, me semble (comme à vous aultres, messieurs) informe et imperfaict. Comme un ours naissant n'a pieds ne mains, peau, poil ne teste, ce n'est qu'une pièce de chair rude et informe. L'ourse, à force de lescher, la met en perfection de membres. Ainsi voy-je (comme vous aultres, messieurs) naistre les procès à leurs commencemens informes et sans membres. Ilz n'ont qu'une pièce ou deux: c'est pour lors une laide beste. Mais lors qu'ilz ont bien entassez, enchassez, et ensachez, on les peut vrayement dire membruz et formez."*

The verb *se prélasser*—to assume mock-prelatical airs—is, I believe, only found in this form in *Pantagruel*, Montaigne using the more regular form *se prelater;* but it would be rash to state that La Fontaine took it from Rabelais. He may well have overheard it from some gossip at Château-Thierry, or elsewhere.

"L'asne, *se prélassant*, marche seul devant eux"†

* "A suit-in-law, at its production, birth, and first beginning, seemeth to me, as unto your other worships, shapeless, without form or fashion, incomplete, ugly, and imperfect, even as a bear, at his first coming into the world, has neither hands, skin, hair, nor head, but is merely an inform, rude, and ill-favoured piece and lump of flesh, and would remain so if his dam . did not with much licking, put his members into figure and shape. Just so do I see, as your other worships do, processes and suits of law, at their first bringing forth, to be without shape, deformed, and disfigured, for that they consist only of one or two writings . misshapen beasts. But when these . are packed, piled, inpoked, ensatcheled . (become) more completely membered" (*Pantagruel*, III, 42 Urquhart)

† "And like a prelate, donkey marched alone"
(*Fables*, III, 1 Wright)

As for *papelard*—false monk, hypocrite—substantive or adjective, it occurs in many an old tale, as in Rabelais. La Fontaine owes it to none, for it was common property and speech.

We cited two names of cats, a while back: here is a third: *Mitis*.

> "Nostre maistre *Mitis*,
> Pour la seconde fois, les trompe et les affine." *

In the same sense is used *Maître le Doux*—Master Soft Speech. This name takes us back to the old tale-tellers dipped into by La Fontaine. This name for a cat is in the twenty-third story of Bonaventure des Périers.

La Fontaine must have read Amyot with delight. Amyot's French, we may well believe, was not undervalued by seventeenth-century writers. Vaugelas, who is not indulgent to the old speech, says that "all the resources and treasures of the true French tongue exist in the works of this great man." Racine, La Fontaine's friend, quotes, in his preface to *Mithridate*, Plutarch's words on Monimus, "as Amiot has rendered them, for," says the tragic poet, "they have a grace in this translator's old-fashioned style, that our modern tongue cannot equal, as I may use it." Fénelon writes, in his *Letter on Eloquence*, "In the old language of Amyot, there is a something hard to define, something fresh, downright, vivid, and to the point, of which we feel the lack."

Yes, there are in Amyot's language these indefinable qualities. But they are also in La Fontaine's: his also is vivid, downright, fresh, and pointed.

* "Mr Mildandsly a second time deceives them."
(*Fables*, III, 18. Wright.)

La Fontaine found in Amyot a subject for a fable, *The Women and the Secret:* and in the same place he found a word he had perhaps done well to leave there, the word *sycophante*, which, as is apparent, is more Greek than French.

Συκοφάντης from σῦκον, a fig, and φαίνειν, to make apparent, was the name anciently given to those who denounced the fig-stealers in the woods of Attica.

"Les delateurs qui accusoient et decelaient ceux qui en (des figues) transportoient furent appelez *sycophantes*"*

In more general acceptation of the word, a sycophant is a spy. This extension of meaning is not forced. But La Fontaine uses *sycophante* for a wolf who disguises himself as a shepherd,† the better to destroy the sheep.

"Guillot le sycophante approche doucement
Guillot, the vrai Guillot, etendu sur l'herbette,
Dormoit alors profondement"‡

This wolf, this false Guillot, is a rascal: he is not a spy, and the word *sycophante* does not fit him. This is to talk Greek about a prowling wolf, and not good Greek at that. La Fontaine has accustomed us to greater precision and simplicity.

He was aware that the expression was obscure, for he was careful to explain it in a foot-note. The cleverest are liable to error, and I cannot

* "The spys who accused and made known those who carried off the figs, were called sycophants" (Amyot, *Solon*)

† In sheep's clothing, as we say.

‡ "The imposter Willie stole upon the keep
The real Willie, on the grass asleep,
Slept there, indeed, profoundly"
(*Fables*, III, 3 Wright.)

stand by our author where, in an apologue of very mediocre quality, he calls the snake an *insect.** I would say here that all La Fontaine's Fables are not of equal excellence: and if there is no more admirable poem in French than *Le Vieillard et les trois Jeunes Hommes*,† on the other hand *La Cigale et la Fourmi*‡ is rather thin and poor. This fable is widely known because it heads the collection, on the first page; no one would think much of it did it stand on page a-hundred. We are all more or less like Petit Jean, in *Les Plaideurs:* what we know best is the beginning. Every schoolboy knows the opening lines of Boileau's *l'Art Poétique:*

"C'est en vain qu'au Parnasse. . . ."

The lines are but middling. But there are very fine passages in the *Epîtres* and *Lutrin;* but you must know where to look for them.

To come back to my subject. La Fontaine loves ancient terms. When he comes across an old word and an expressive one, he gathers it, and avails himself of the first chance of using it in a verse.

A great reader of romances, he read the oldest as he read the latest. Tales of chivalry he favoured much: he owns to it in a pretty ballade.

"Même dans les plus vieux je tiens qu'on peut aprendre.
Perceval le Galois vient encore à son tour."§

* *Fables*, VI, 13.

† The Old Man and the Three Young Ones. (*Fables*, XI, 8.)

‡ The Grasshopper and the Ant. (*Fables*, I, 1.)

§ "Since from the oldest I hold there is much to be learnt—
Percival of Gaul has still his turn."
(Ballade on the reading of romances.)

When it was the turn of the "*Premier volume de Merlin*," which is the first volume of the Round Table, our poet meets this phrase:

"Ainsi advient-il de plusieurs car tels cuident *enginer* ung autre, qui *s'enoignent* eux mesmes."*

The word *enginer* or *engignier* dates from the twelfth century.† In the thirteenth century we find in Henri of Valenciennes the same dictum that we have just met with in the first volume of Merlin:

"On dit proverbe que teus (tels) cuident autrui *enginer*, qui de cel mesmes *enoient* ou de semblant c'est *enginer*."‡

Engigner, or *engeigner*, means to deceive. The word comes, like *engine*, from the Latin *ingenium*. We find *ingeniator* in Plautus. The word and the maxim seemed excellent to La Fontaine, who put both into his verse:

"*Tel*, comme dit Merlin *cuide engeigner autruy*,
Qui souvent s'enveloppe soy mesme
Je regret que ce mot soit trop vieux aujourd'hui,
Il m'a toujours semblé d'une energie extrême"§

* "So it fell out with many for they who think to deceive another, deceive themselves."

† For the history of this word, as well as for the examples, I am indebted to Littré.

‡ "It was said long ago that some thought to deceive others who were by those same deceived" (II de V (xxiv)).

§ "They to bamboozle are inclined
Saith Merlin, who bamboozled are
The word, though rather unrefined,
Has yet an energy we ill can spare"
(*Fables*, IV, 11 Wright)

Cf. Eng. "Gin"=trap or snare (Chaucer).

These four lines come from a man who knows the value of words, and is unwilling that we should ever lose a good one.

And so he put into his poems a great number of old-time expressions, to which he lent new life. We have just seen the old verb *cuider*—believe. Another I will cite is *aragne*, the old form of *araignée*—spider. The word *araignée* is old, likewise: but it signified the *web* of the spider. "The new speech," says Littré, "is impoverished and disfigured in confounding the workman with the work." The confusion would seem to have arisen in the sixteenth century. La Fontaine does not appear to have suspected it. He employed indifferently, and in the same sense, *aragne* and *araignée*.

"Quand l'enfer eut produit la goute et *l'araignée*. . . ."*

"Plus malheureuse mille fois
Que la plus malheureuse *aragne*." †

By keeping two different designations for the same object, he burdens the language with a useless possession.

He is better inspired when he recovers from Montaigne the terms *déconfiture* (discomfiture) and *besogne*, meaning what is wanted—*de besoin*.

"Le galand pour toute besogne
Avoit un brouet clair. Il vivoit chichement." ‡

'When Nature angrily turned out
Those plagues, the spider and the gout."
(*Fables*, III, 8. Wright.)

'. . . More evils did betide her
Than ere befell the poorest spider." (*Fables*, ibid.)

'A frugal liver . . . the total matter
Was thinnish soup served on a platter."
(*Fables*, I, 18. Wright.)

It must not be thought that, because he loved the old writers, he worked in their style. And fond as he was of many a word of times gone by, he knew how to keep this side of archaism, notably in his fables. But the familiar manner of their writing, in great part, has aged more quickly than the grand manner of the same epoch.

The familiar style quickly shows signs of use, like everything in this world which does much service. Grammarians who would fix it labour in vain. It changes because it is alive. Movement is a condition of life. So it comes about that such and such a form employed by La Fontaine as being the more usual, has become strange to us. *Flouet* for *fluet* – thin, fine; and *étreit* for *étroit*—narrow, are examples of this. *Propet* is particularly instructive:

> "Certain nièce assez *propette*
> Et sa chambrière Pâquette
> Devoient avoir des cottillons." *

To-day we say *propret* and not *propet*. But see what one finds in the *Dictionnaire de Trevoux* (1771).

Propet, propette instead of *propret, ette*, adj. dim. of *propre*. *Propet* only is in use.

So we may see that the poet in using *propette* was not indulging in archaism. It is not so in various cases which I will here point out.

The adverbs *jà* for *déjà* † (already), *lors* for *alors* ‡ (then), *dedans* for *dans* § (in), *encore que* for

* "A pretty niece, on whom he doted
And eke her chambermaid, should be promoted
By being newly petticoated."
(*Fables*, VII, 11. Wright.)

† *Fables*, IX, 10. ‡ *Ibid.*, III, 19. § *Ibid*, II, 2.

*bien que** (although) were going out of use when La Fontaine wrote, and these lend something *marotique*† to his style. *Devant que* was already of yesterday when our author employed it.

"Il pria le cheval de l'aider quelque ;
Autrement il mourroit *devant qu'*estre à la ville." ‡

Avecque in three syllables was no longer the fashion.

"*Avecque* Tien-et-mien, son père." §

And while La Fontaine was giving the preposition three syllables in his fable, Racine, who was revising his *Thébaïde*, was removing, as far as he could, the trisyllabic form. In 1664 he had written :

"Mais pourquoy donc sortir *avecque* vostre armeé?
Quel est ce mouvement qui m'a tant alarmée?" ||

When he prepared his edition of 1687, he struck out these two lines and replaced them with :

"Mais que prétendiez-vous? Et quelle ardeur soudaine
Vous a fait tout à coup descendre dans la plaine?" ¶

* Dedication. † Of Marot.

‡ "And begged the horse a little help to give,
Or otherwise he could not reach the town."
(*Fables*, VI, 16. Wright.)

§ "With Thine-and-Mine her stingy . . . father."
(*Fables*, VI, 20. Wright.)

|| "But why then, sally forth with this your host in arms?
What may this movement be that causes such alarms?"
(*Thébaïde*, Act I, sc. iii.)

¶ "But what is your pretence? What sudden heat thus gains
Your will that you should straight descend upon the plains."
(*Thébaïde*, Act I, sc. iii.)

I am aware that old Corneille preserved the form *avecque* even in his latest tragedies; but he cared little about being in the fashion.

As for La Fontaine's poetry, if it comes about that he is attired in the fashion of his grandmother's day, like Sleeping Beauty, it is involuntary as in her case, or at any rate without seeming to mind; and again like her, with the utmost grace.

Our fable-teller generally took his diction from the people. If anyone went to consult Malherbe about the value of a word he told them to go and listen to the country folk at the Port au Foin.

La Fontaine let nothing escape him that he heard in street or country-side. His chief source, and his richest, and the one that never failed him, was the tongue of the populace. He draws from it such expressive words as *lipee** and *souffleur*.† This last means alchemist.

"*Souffleur* se dit d'un chercheur de pierre philosophique, qui a un fourneau et qui convertit son bien en charbon a la persuasion de quelques charlatans qui lui font entendre qu'ils ont de beaux secrets" (Furetiere)

This excellent word, which depicts so well, is an old one. It is in a fourteenth-century text quoted by Littre:

"Laissez fourneaux, vaisseaux divers
De ces *souffleurs* faulx et pervers" ‡

* A sup, mouthful

† "Bellows-blower" (Wright)

"*Souffleur* is used for a seeker after the philosopher's stone, who has a furnace, and converts his all into fuel, at the persuasion of charlatans who make him believe that they have wonderful secrets" (Furetière)

‡ "Let be the furnaces and divers vessels
Of alchemists untruthful and misled" (Nat. a l'alch.)

La Fontaine uses the word in the contemptuous sense that befits it:

> "Charlatans, faiseurs d'horoscope
> Quittez les cours des princes de l'Europe:
> Emmenez avec vous les *souffleurs* tout d'un temps."*

He lost no chance of borrowing from popular speech any good descriptive expression, such as *tirer ses grègues*† (pull up one's boots) or *enfiler la venelle*‡ (thread the path). Both terms are proverbial, and amount to *s'enfuir* (take flight or flee). But *s'enfuir* is not descriptive, whereas *enfiler la venelle* is a picture in itself. *Attendre chape-chute à la porte*§ is an expression full of colour. And notice, too, *sentir le fagot*‖ and *porter habit de deux paroisses*.

> "Quoique, ainsi que la pie, il faille dans ces lieux
> *Porter habit de deux paroisses.*" ¶

Here is M. Lorin's explanation of this expression: "In old days beadles wore a coat, or rather, a robe whose colour indicated the parish to which

* "Ye horoscopers, waning quacks,
Please turn on Europe's courts your backs
And take . . . the bellows-blowing alchemists."
(*Fables*, II, 13. Wright.)

† *Fables*, II, 15.

‡ *Ibid.*, XII, 17.

§ Hoping for some windfall. Literally, that someone may "drop his cloak."

‖ Smell of heresy. Because heretics were burnt. (*Fables*, IV 19.)

¶ "But still, if one would meet success,
Of different parishes the dress
He, like the pie, must wear."
(*Fables*, XII, 11. Wright.)

they were attached. When, as the result of some particular agreement, two parishes were united in one, the beadle's robe was, as to one-half, of the colour of the suppressed parish, as to the other half, of the parish preserved."

"I can remember seeing in my young days, beadles who wore their parti-striped coats. *Porter un habit de deux paroisses* means, accordingly, to wear the colours of two masters, and figuratively, to trim, or try to please two factions. . . . This phrase, which is proverbial, is amusingly applied to the magpie, whose plumage is, in fact, of opposite shades, black and white. One speaks jestingly, moreover, of a *habit de deux paroisses* or *de trente-six paroisses* (thirty-six parishes), in reference to an old coat that has been patched with bits of different colour or shade."*

Ronsard says to the would-be poet: "You must frequent the company of workmen of every trade, of the calling of the sea, of the arts of venery and falconry, and particularly of artisans who employ fire, goldsmiths, metal-founders, blacksmiths, and metal-workers, and you will get from them many an excellent and vivid figure of speech, and the right names used in crafts, and this will enrich your work, and perfect it, and render it the more pleasing."†

The advice was good: La Fontaine, doubtless, did not know that it was given by Ronsard; but he, Jean, gave himself the same good counsel, and followed it from inclination, for he was given to looking up words everywhere that had been well imagined, and proved in use.

* *Vocabulaire pour La Fontaine*, p. 128.
† *Abrégé de l'art poétique français.*

Furetière, who had been La Fontaine's friend before he became his enemy, and who made the best dictionary that could be made in those days, was awake and sensible to everything fitting and forcible in the language of occupations. It annoys him to see the liberal professions so little versed in the artisan's vocabulary. "A mathematician," he says, "who wants to speak of the fulcrum of a lever, has recourse to Greek, and calls it *hypomocléon*, because he does not know what the workmen call it, and that is, *orgueil* or *pride*." The example is chosen by a great grammarian, and the word *orgueil* is very happily imagined.

One knows that *venerie* (venery) was an art, and a very noble one. I mean because it was the pursuit of noblemen. To say the truth, I find little that is generous feeling in a stag-hunt, and see nothing noble in killing a timid and inoffensive animal which is straightway dismembered and cast to the hounds. But that does not come in here. The nobility killed the stag according to set rules: these rules were many and strict: Charles the Ninth's huntsman, le Sieur du Fouilloux, set them forth in a methodical treatise. Du Fouilloux speaks the language of the chase, and it is a very precise language, and therefore good. Now, La Fontaine knew the language of the chase as well as Du Fouilloux did, and, at necessity, spoke it faultlessly.

In *Les Fâcheux* is a long passage full of hunting terms: Molière, they say, learnt them from M. de Soyecourt, a great hunter, and a great *fâcheux*.* I do not know if Soyecourt gave the fabulist lessons

* An annoying person, a bore.

in the same subject; it is enough for me to know that he fully possesses the matter.

"L'animal charge d'ans, vieux cerf et de *dix cors*
En *supposé* un plus jeune, et l'oblige par force
A presenter aux chiens une nouvelle amorce
Que de raisonnemens pour conserver ses jours!
Le retour sur ses pas, les malices, les tours
Et le *change*, et cent stratagemes,
Dignes des plus grands chefs, dignes d'un meilleur sort!
On le dechire apres sa mort
Ce sont tous ses honneurs supremes *
(La Fontaine *Discours a Mme de la Sabliere*)

Dix cors, *supposer*, *change* are terms of venery. The stag of *dix cors* (a stag of ten) is a seven-year stag; we come upon it again in *Les Deux Coqs*

"Nous conclusmes tous d'attacher nos efforts
Sur un cerf qu'au chacun nous disoit cerf *dix cors*"

Supposer (to hunt counter, or change) amounts to a substitution, and needs no explanation. The *change* came about, when the beast managed to *supposer* or substitute another in his place

All this is well expressed. And he calls dogs by their right names, and knows what is a *limier* or leash-hound, a *mâtin* or mastiff, a *basset*, or basset-hound, that *lice* is the bitch of this hound, and

* "An ancient stag of antlers ten,
He puts a younger in his place,
All fresh, to weary out the chase
What thought for one that merely grazes!
The doublings, turnings, windings, mazes,
The substituting fresher bait,
Were worthy of a man of State—
And worthy of a better fate
To yield to rascal dogs his breath
Is all the honour of his death! (Wright)

what, properly speaking, is the *canaille*. Let us stop a moment at this last term: we come across it twice in the Fables.

"Et chacun de tirer, le mastin, la *canaille*,
A qui mieux mieux: ils firent tous ripaille." *

". . . Il prend trois chiens de taille
A luy dépenser moins, mais à fuir la bataille.
Le troupeau s'en sentit; et tu te sentiras
Du choix de semblable *canaille*." †

In these two passages the word *canaille* is taken in its etymological sense; *canaille* derives from the Italian *cane* (dog), and designates dogs of small size, terriers and the like. We find in our author examples of the same word used in its figurative acceptation, which is, by far, the more usual. Notably, it is applied to a child who has tumbled into the water and is admonished by his pedagogue in most untimely fashion. Instead of fishing him out, he calls him a monkey—*babouin*—and thereto:

"Que les parens sont malheureux, qu'il faille
Toujours veiller à semblable *canaille!*" ‡

So this poor child is dubbed "monkey" and "puppy" ere he is restored to dry ground. To return to our hunting-dogs. They have their

* ". . . Then follow mastiff, cur, and pup,
'Till all is cleanly eaten up." (*Fables*, VIII, 7.)

† ". . . took three dogs to watch this cattle
Which ate far less, but fled from battle
His flock such counsel lived to rue,
As doubtlessly, my friend, will you. . . ."
(*Fables*, VIII, 18. Wright.)

‡ "Alas! their lot I pity much
Whom fate condemns to watch o'er such."
(*Fables*, I, 19. Wright.)

proper designations, and are distinguished from one another by character, virtue, or vice.

In the Fables there is one called *Miraut* (IV, 4), another called *Brifaut* (IX, 14). *Miraut* comes from *mirer*—to gaze. He is the dog with sharp sight, who spies the game. *Brifaut* is from *briffer* to eat greedily—*bouffer*. He is a greedy dog.

Falconry was an art, like venery, and had, like venery, its laws and its vocabulary. The fabulist knows the falconer's language, when he says:

> "Elle avoit évité la perfide machine
> Lorsque, se rencontrant sous la *main* de l'oiseau,
> Elle sent son ongle malin," *

and gives the kite a *main* or *hand*, he does as all have done who have written of hawking. *Gorge-chaude* is a picturesque term proper to falconry. The fabulist employs it figuratively: the frog, who leads away the rat:

> "Prétend qu'elle en fera *gorge-chaude* et curée" †

The *gorge-chaude* is the prey, still warm and quivering, given to the falcon, the gerfalcon, the peregrine, and all birds of the chase, as their reward.

La Fontaine speaks of village matters as a villager, and treats country things as a countryman. And so he is always true to life. He uses, as occasion serves, long-established words, of the earth, earthy:

* "She thus escaped the fowler's steel,
The hawk's malignant claws to feel" (*Fables*, VI, 15)

† "And pledged a dinner worth his eating" (*Fables*, IV, 2)

In English falconry *gorge* The text explains this. *Main* in English terminology was "pounce"

he says *faire l'août* (August) for harvesting, which is the chief business of the month of August:

"Remuez vostre champ dès qu'on aura *fait l'oust.*" *

Corn is a general expression—there is corn and corn: *la touzelle* is one kind. He uses *touzelle* (an early wheat) as a poet may, who is exact in his diction.

"L'oust arrive, la touzelle est siée." †

I would remark here that general descriptive terms lend vagueness to a recital; particular terms lend precision, and sharpen the definition. Buffon advised the use of general expressions, but Buffon was not a teller of tales. His care was to ennoble the speech he employed. The poet who would paint from nature will do rather as La Fontaine did: he will prefer the terms that denote the family, to those that denote the species, or even a variety of the species.

La touzelle, to come back to it, is a corn that has no beard; and, seeing that the old verb *touzer* meant shear, or shave, we may suppose that *touzelle* meant what is *tondue*, *glabre*, that is, shaven, or smooth.

Fourche-fière is also of the country-side.

"Un chien de cour l'arreste: épieux et *fourches fières*
L'ajustent de toutes manières." ‡

* "... the harvest past,
Turn over every inch of sod." (*Fables*, V, 9. Wright.)

† "August here, the corn is cut."
(Tales. *Le Diable de Papefiguière.*)
"Siée" = sciée = cut with the sickle.

‡ "... the dogs rush out
.
... rustic spears and forks of iron
The hapless animal environ."
(*Fables*, IV, 16. Wright.)

Is this *furca ferrea* or *furca fera;* an iron fork, or a cruel fork? There is no knowing. The word is from Picardy, and in Picardy they say *fier* for *fer* (iron) and *fierrer* for *ferrer* (to shoe a horse).

La Fontaine frequented the cabaret in the Place St. Jean in the days when the *Plaideurs* was performing: who knows but that he may have whispered to Racine some of the jargon used by those practitioners.

Racine had been at law, and the documents served upon him ought to have taught him at his own expense the idiom of the Courts. But it is enough to read the *Will expounded by Æsop* to see that our poet knows legal language.

"Il faut que chaque sœur se charge *par traité*
Du *tiers payable à volonté*,
Si mieux n'aime la mère *en créer une rente*." *

This savours of the Courts. We have known him speak as a huntsman, as a hawker, as a labourer, and now he talks like a judge. He is of all trades. To speak of love like a man of fashion can hardly be included in such, but nevertheless this good man speaks that language readily.

He is a little precious, and is not sparing of his *charms*, his *attractions*, and his *flames*, words which, after all, sound better in a fable than in a tragedy. And he does not fail to call his love a *shepherdess*.

". . . changé les bois, changé les lieux
Honorez par les pas, *éclairez par les yeux*
De l'aimable et jeune *bergère*

* "We hold it just the daughters each should pay
One third to her upon demand
Should she not choose to have it stand
Commuted as a life-annuity."
(*Fables*, II, 20. Wright.)

Pour qui, sous le fils de Cythère,
Je *servis* engagé par mes premiers sermens." *

Some there are who find affectation in terms that tell of woods *lighted by the eyes* of a young woman; but if all eyes are constructed to receive light, there are some that seem to give it forth, and the poet has but transferred a charming impression into charming verse. He says further that he *served under Venus' son.* It is a way of his to liken love, now to war, now to the chase, now to angling. His contemporaries did just the same.

Nothing should be neglected that may be of use. It is a maxim of economy that applies to every kind of goods, to all *chevance*† (to speak our author's tongue) and to the treasures of speech as to all wealth. When a word of sound worth has unhappily lost its primitive sense, and is no longer used save in its particular and perverted acceptation, a writer who knows his business will restore to it the full scope and amplitude of its first signification. Racine did this when he restored to the word *reliques* its wider meaning of *remains* at a time when the word, confined to language of devotion, no longer applied to anything but the venerated ashes and bones of the saints.

"Ils s'arrestent, non loin de ces tombeaux antiques
Où des rois ses ayeux sont les froides *reliques.*" ‡

* (For what treasure would I change)
". . . The woods, each spot I once did prize,
Graced by the step, and lighted by the eyes
Of that young shepherdess beloved and won
When I was votary of Venus' son."(—*Fables*, IX, 2.)

† *Chevance*="le bien qu'on a"=one's worldly goods.

‡ "Then stops, not far from those old tombs that mark
Where lie the ashes of his royal sires."
(*Phèdre*. V. 6. Boswell.)

"This word *reliques* is beautiful and sonorous," wrote André Chénier, on the margin of his copy of Malherbe's poems. Racine, who knew treasure for what it was, and did not let it escape him, twice took it into use. What Racine did for *reliques*, La Fontaine did for *hostie*, and with equal felicity. This word, meaning *victim*, had come to be confined to that victim of all others, Jesus Christ, offered to men under the species of bread. Our poet gave new life to this fine term:

"Du céleste courroux tous furent les *hosties*." *

Hostie here is synonymous with *victime*. But *victime* would be less rare and not make so fine a line.

A writer of great excellence may, on the other hand, afford new extension of meaning to certain words, and find an unsuspected application for a phrase. The word *jonchée*, for example, properly designates a scattering of leaves, flowers and twigs on the earth.

"En prodiguant dessus mille fleurs épancheés
Pour cacher notre meurtre à l'abri des *jonchées*." †

La Fontaine had the art to give this word a figurative turn which is both singular and apt, in applying it, not to fallen leaves, but to the dead rats killed in the field of battle.

"La principale jonchée
Fut donc des principaux rats" ‡

* "All were victims of the divine wrath."
(Philemon et Baucis.)

† "And prodigal of flowers profusely strown,
We hide our murder under leaves downthrown."
(D'Aubigné. *Tragiques*, II.)

‡ "And so the captains fled,
As well as those they led;
The princes perished, all. . . ."
(*Fables*, IV, 6 Wright.)

We can pick out from La Fontaine's work a great number of terms applied in a way at once apt and provoked by the occasion. A *lunettière* is a woman who sells spectacles; La Fontaine uses the term for a woman who wears them. And why not?

"Il s'en fallut bien peu
Que l'on ne vist tomber la *lunetière*." *

This brings us back to Rabelais, who applies *lunettière* to the ear that carries them.

"Je te donneroys, respondit le marchand, un coup d'espeé sur ceste aureille *lunctière*." †

To our poet has been imputed the invention of the word *poulaille*, which is not in the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française;* but La Fontaine was born too late for that. *Polaille* was already in existence in the thirteenth century. Littré gives an instance drawn from the *Livre des métiers*—the Book of Trades.

Poulaille is in *Froissart:*

"Et leur apportoit-on des villages environ toutes sortes de douceurs, fruits, beurre, *poulailles*, et autres choses." ‡

La Fontaine used the word *nagée* to express the movements of an animal progressing in the water.

"Car au bout de quelques *nagées*
Tout son sel se fondit si bien. . . ." §

* "The be-spectacled woman was very nearly seen to fall." (Tales. *Les Lunettes.*)

† "I would give thee," answered the dealer, "a sword-stroke on that spectacled lug of thine." (*Pantagruel*, IV, 5. Smith.)

‡ "And brought them from the villages round about all sorts of offerings, fruit, butter, *poultry*, and other things." (Froissart, II, 11.)

§ "For after a few strokes the salt melted, etc. . . ." (*Fables*, II, 10.)

He is speaking of a donkey, and in reference to a donkey the poet could not speak of *brassées*.* *Nagée* is not found in any text anterior to the Fables, but if La Fontaine was the first to write this word, he may well have heard it in some country district. It is a good word, and likely of popular formation.

The same may be said of *besacier*. It is only found in the Fables.

> "Le fabriquateur souverain
> Nous crea *besaciers* tous de mesme manière." †

But any simple villager seeing a beggar with his wallet standing at the door of a farm, or at the iron gate of a mansion, might call a beggar a *besacier* or pouch-bearer, before ever the word was written or printed. We must not forget that it is the people that make the language.

Daubeur from *dauber*—to strike, mock at, is, equally, a word that must be credited to the populace.

> "Messieurs les courtisans, cessez de vous détruire;
> Faites, si vous pouvez, vostre cour sans vous nuire,
> Le mal se rend chez vous au quadruple du bien,
> Les *daubeurs* ont leur tour d'une ou d'autre manière." ‡

There remains only the word *fabuliste* to consider, as the invention of La Fontaine. It was the opinion of Lamotte, who says very justly of this term, "The word was established by La Fontaine,

* *Brassées* would mean strokes with the *arms*. *Nagée* from *nager* = to swim.

† "Kind heaven has made us all wallet-bearers."
(*Fables*, I, 7. Wright.)

‡ "Beware, ye courtiers, lest ye gain
By slander's arts, less power than pain," etc.
(*Fables*, VIII, 3 Wright.)

in whose domain it was to bestow such names." When a woman of wit called La Fontaine not her *fabuliste* but her *fablier*, there was a touch of malice present. She meant that the good man bore fables as a tree bears fruit, and produced apologues as an apple tree apples.*

La Fontaine, then, a great user of words, invented very few. It is a thing to be remarked that good writers are generally sparing of neologisms. The well of our common speech suffices them. Some writers do not stir its deeps to their own profit so cleverly as others. Whether from lack of labour or necessary genius, many do not find what they want. La Fontaine drew forth treasures.

I have laid weight, several times, on proper names, for whether they designate man, beast, or locality, proper names help as much as common ones to lend character to the style and life of the phraseology.

I will say nothing about mythological names, such as *Zephyr*, *Jupiter*, *Venus*, the *Loves* and the *Graces*, etc., which appear frequently in the Fables. La Fontaine, in employing them, in no way differs from writers of his period. Shall I make an exception of *Phaeton*, used as a generic name for chariot-driver, and ironically applied to a thick-headed carter?

"Le Phaeton d'une voiture à foin." †

This expression, passably burlesque, is not noticeably original. Without looking far a-field, I find its analogue in Boileau:

* *Pomme* = apple. *Pommier* = apple-tree.
So Fable = fablier.

† "The Phaeton who drove a load of hay."
(*Fables*, VI, 18. Wright.)

"Car à peine les coqs commençant leur ramage,
Auront de cris aigus frappé le voisinage,
Qu'un affreux serrurier, *laborieux Vulcain*,
De cent coups de marteaux va me fendre la tête." *

The two turns of speech I am now going to cite are, on the contrary, quite in the poet's manner.

"La gent *marécageuse*
Gent fort sotte et fort peureuse,
S'alla cacher sous les eaux." †

Marécageux commonly means that which is in the nature of a *marécage*, or *marsh*—marshy. But in the Fable of the frogs it means inhabiting the marshes. This is invention, something new *Moutonnière créature* is equally an invented term, and still more happily so. That is *moutonnier*—sheepish, which partakes of the nature of *moutons* or sheep. But to qualify a *sheep* thus, the sheep itself, a sheep of the sheepiest, is to be original.

"Sur l'animal beslant à ces mots il s'abat.
La *moutonnière créature*
Pesoit plus qu'un fromage; outre que sa toison
Estoit d'une épaisseur extrême." ‡

* "No sooner have the cocks, in vocal mood,
With their shrill outcry roused the neighbourhood,
Than the dread blacksmith, Laborious Vulcan . . .
With hundred hammer-blows must split my head."
(Boileau. Satire VI.)

† "The marshy folk, a foolish race and timid,
Made breathless haste to get from him hid."
(*Fables*, III, 4. Wright.)

‡ "And on the creature bleating
He settled down. Now, sooth to say
This sheep would weigh
More than a cheese,
And had a fleece, etc. . ."
(*Fables*, II, 16 Wright.)

Once more we must return to Panurge, and his sheep. You have heard Panurge, in the passage I quoted a while back, ask whether there remained "any sheepish soul." La Fontaine remembers the passage, and copies the expression:

> "Qu'un seul mouton se jette en la rivière,
> Vous ne verrez nulle *âme moutonnière*
> Rester au bord." *

You will perhaps be surprised to hear vaunted as original in La Fontaine, expressions first forged by Rabelais. But the fabulist had the art to mark them with his own mark and make them his own. The greatest makers of language can do no more, and even that is one of the happiest capacities of genius.

I will quote an example of this happy capacity of the poetic order.

La Fontaine says:

> "... O belles, évitez
> Le fond des bois et leur *vaste* silence." †

The epithet *vaste*—vast—applied to silence, makes it solemn. Herein lies the whole beauty of the line, which does but translate the *per vasta silentia* of Lucan. Put *profond* in place of *vaste*, and the line is hopelessly spoilt.

An analogous example, from Racine, will help to make this plain. *Phèdre* has taken poison; she says, as she expires:

* "Let one sheep jump into the stream
You will not see a single sheepish soul
Stay on the bank...." (Tales. *L'Abbesse.*)

† "... O ye fair, avoid
The depths of the woods, and their vast silence."
(Tales. *La Clochette.*)

"Le fer auroit déjà tranché ma destinée.
Mais je laissois gémir la vertu soupçonnée.
J'ay voulu, devant vous exposant mes remords,
Par un chemin plus *lent* descendre chez les morts" *

The last line has obvious beauty; we have but to change two letters to make it but mediocre; put

"Par un chemin plus *long* descendre chez les morts"

and the charm is vanished. The whole charm came from the word *lent* (slow), which gave the path of the dead a kind of mysterious life, indefinable, profound. Great beauty in poetry may be at the same time beauty of the most delicate. But enough. The beauty of beautiful verse is better felt than explained. And I only promised consideration of certain words. I have said enough if I can fire younger people with the wish to look closer at those fables which they learned to lisp at their mother's knees.

They cannot re-read them, but they will make most precious discoveries, for these little poems, so telling and so subtly told, are full of matter. And I should be glad if these few remarks helped to further the love of our native tongue even among the elect. It has often undergone change, but each change brings with it a fresh beauty. In the thirteenth century, the Florentine, Brunetto Latini, adopted it as "the most delectable" of all. In 1396 an English grammarian could not sufficiently

* "the sword ere now had cut
My thread of life, but slandered innocence
Made its cry heard, and I resolved to die
In a more lingering way, confessing first
My penitence to you" (*Phèdre*, V, 7 Boswell)

admire "le doulz françois qui est, dit-il, la plus bêle et la plus gracious langage et plus noble parler (après latin d'escole) qui soit au monde, et de tous gens mieux prisée et amée que nul autre."*

It has gained much in strength and scope since that day. Each generation has enriched it with vocables which bear witness for all time to the thoughts, the passions, the joys, the sufferings, born of the efforts of millions of mankind. It has come down to us then, richly burdened, from age to age, at great cost and great travail, and this patriotic heritage is dear to every soul that cherishes, for France, a love made greater and more resplendent by understanding.

* "Sweet French, which is," he says, "the fairest and most gracious speech and the noblest tongue (after the Latin of the schools) that may be in the world, and prized and loved by all peoples beyond all other."

MOLIÈRE



OLIÈRE is a Parisian. Jean Poquelin, tapiser, and son of a tapiser, and whose brothers were also tapisers, having taken to wife Marie Cressé, a tapiser's daughter, had a son by her before the nine months had gone by. The child, born hard by the market, in a house in the Rue Saint-Honoré where Poquelin had his shop, was baptized on January 15th, 1622, and was called Jean, as was his father before him. After the ceremony Marie Cressé, his mother, put away in a tapestry-covered coffer, for their safe-keeping, the robes in which the child had been christened.

Jean Poquelin confidently reckoned on his son becoming a tapiser; he was destined to be the prince of comic poets.

In the year 1631 Jean Poquelin's younger brother, Nicolas Poquelin, tapiser in ordinary to the King's household, yielded up his office in favour of his elder brother. The King's tapisers were but eight in their office, and served quarterly, two at a time. Their service was, daily, to assist the valets of the Chamber in the making of the King's bed; during the quarter in which they were on duty, they had charge of the furniture of the country châteaux where the Court chanced to sojourn, and they had the making of the royal furniture. They were, further, charged with the decoration of houses when processions went by.

Their wages amounted to three hundred livres, and they received thirty-seven livres ten sols bonus. Theirs was, therefore, an honourable and lucrative office. Jean Poquelin was careful that it should be continued in his eldest son.

Jean Poquelin had of his wife six children in less than eleven years, two of them dying at an early age. His house was well stocked with linen and with silver, and filled with tapestried furniture. Marie Cressé's gowns were of grogran from Naples, ratteen from Florence, and of silken moire. She might adorn her in beautiful jewels, bracelets, necklaces, ear-rings of fine pearl, gold chains—and she had two watches, one in gold and enamel, and one in chased silver, and fourteen rings, set with diamonds, emeralds, and opals. Her chaplet of mother-of-pearl bore a *Saint-Esprit* set with a diamond. The book-marker in her book of hours was embroidered in fine pearls.

Madame Poquelin's father, Louis de Cressé, had a fine country house in the High Street at Saint Ouen, with courtyard, stable, and garden. Jean Poquelin and his wife used to spend their Sundays there, in the summer season, and take their children with them. There they wanted for nothing, and there were even rods for the correction of their small boys and girls.

Marie Cressé died in the month of May, 1632, in her thirty-second year, leaving behind in this world four children, three sons and a daughter, the eldest child, Molière, being hardly eleven years old. One year after, in May, 1633, Jean Poquelin took to himself a second wife, Catherine, daughter of Eustache Fleurette, merchant and bourgeois of Paris. Was Catherine Elmire or Béline? None

can say. But she was not long on the scene. She gave her husband two daughters; Catherine in 1634 and Marguerite in 1636, and died in childbed November 12th, 1636.

Of Molière's youth we know little with certainty. Having learnt his letters, he passed into the shop and was employed there in expectation of the time when he should be of an age to succeed his father as Keeper of the Furniture and *valet de chambre* to the King, the office whose continuance was assured him. His maternal grandfather, Louis de Cressé, was a playgoer, it is said. But there was nothing extraordinary in that. Boursault says, "All the merchants to be found in the Rue Saint-Denis repair regularly to the Hôtel de Bourgogne for the first performance of whatever is given there." A character in the comedy of *Zelinde* remarks: "Most merchants of the Rue Saint-Denis are fond of the play, and some forty or fifty of us go, as a rule, to every first performance." The Rue Saint-Denis stood, in common parlance, for all that commercial quarter where were the businesses of the Poquelin and Cressé families. In 1636, the shop and establishment of Jean Poquelin was at the corner of the Rue Saint-Honoré and of the Rue des Vieilles-Étuves, in a house whose sign was the Pavillon des Singes, or Monkey-House. Not far off, in the Rue Mauconseil, was the Hôtel de Bourgogne, built in 1548 by the Brotherhood of the Passion. The Sieur Cressé and his grandson therefore had the play at their doors, and very likely could witness it for nothing. Indeed, Sieur Pierre Dubout, tapiser in ordinary to the King, like Poquelin, was senior-master of the Brotherhood of

the Passion. When they let their hall, the brothers reserved for themselves, and their relations and friends, a box and upper seats above the box. If, as we may suppose, Dubout was on good terms with Poquelin, the young Molière from one or other of these places could feast his fill on Gros Guillaume, Gaultier Garguille, and Turlupin.

Further, let us remember that Jean Poquelin's father had two stalls in the enclosure of the Saint-Germain fair, and that his grandson may well have gone there to see the clowns.

The young inheritor of the Poquelin fortunes apparently did not show sufficient aptitude for the hereditary calling, for his father decided to give him the costly education that opened to a young bourgeois of the time the possibility of making money in a professional calling. It is said that the grandfather, Louis de Cressé, prompted this move.

After he was fifteen years of age, the young Poquelin pursued a course of lectures, as non-resident scholar, at the College of Clermont, where the Jesuits taught the children of the highest families in the Kingdom. As we know, the Fathers had their scholars perform in Latin, but it is going too far to suppose, as some have done, that Molière's taste for and knowledge of the boards was due to these exercises. The ingenuous author of the preface of 1682 would have us admire Molière's excellence in all things, even in his college days: "His success in his studies was such as might well attend on such a blessed genius as was his. He was a good humanist, and became a still greater philosopher. His inclination to poetry led him to read the poets with a particular solicitude; he was perfect master of them, and above all, of Terence."

At this period, the course of philosophy extended over two years, after which the student must sustain a thesis in Latin. But this ceremony was attended by considerable expense, and it is possible that Poquelin, like other fathers, did not find it convenient that his son should take this onerous degree. After the two years' philosophy, followed a year of theology, and then a year or two years of canon-law. After that the student went to Orleans, not for further study, because this was generally in vacation time, but to take out his certificates in the one or the other faculty. Payment, again, was the essential thing, and a learned man was one who had paid his fees. The young licentiate returned to Paris to be called to the Bar.

Poquelin, it is said, followed the same classes as the Prince de Conti. But the usage of the day did not permit of there being any fellowship. But the son of the tapiser formed strong bonds of friendship with his fellow-student Chapelle. Chapelle was the natural son of Luillier, the chief accountant, in whom his contemporaries found something of Rabelais, and with whom Gassendi used to stay when he visited Paris. The good priest ended by taking up his abode in this wealthy and liberal establishment. If Poquelin, as there is reason to believe, frequented the chief accountant's household, he met no doubt, as well as Gassendi, with Bernier, Cyrano, and Henault, men of free, not to say licentious mind, and turned Gassendist and Epicurean. This was the period when he began, they say, a verse translation of the poem of *Lucrèce*, a fragment of which remains to us as a passage in the *Misanthrope*.

It is allowed by his early biographers that he

pursued his legal studies, and was received advocate. Le Boulanger de Chalussay, in his *Élomire*, makes Molière speak thus:

> "In the year forty, or maybe before,
> I came from college where I gathered lore;
> Then, fresh from Orleans and my degree,
> Behold me an advocate—no longer free,
> I pleaded for half a year at the Bar,
> And law and rules of Court I followed far.
> But as later on my practice did lack,
> I quitted La Cujas without looking back" *

Are we to believe Grimarest when he says that Molière, having finished his studies, was obliged, on account of his father's advanced age, to exercise for some time his office of furnisher in ordinary to His Majesty, and make a journey to Narbonne in the suite of Louis XIII? The biographer is wrong when he speaks of the elder Poquelin's great age, for he was then no more than forty-seven. But as there is otherwise proof that in 1642, when Louis XIII made his progress in the south of France, Jean Poquelin did not leave Paris, it may be that his son who had the reversion of the office, went in his place. And it is not impossible that in the course of this tour, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Nîmes, Molière may have met Béjart among a troop of players who performed in the King's presence.

Madeleine Béjart, the daughter of a minor functionary of the Courts, the usher to the Wardens of Lakes and Forests, was not kept, it seems, in very strict bounds by her father, who was overburdened with debts and children. We find that when she was but eighteen, and when her family

* *Élomire hypocondre ou les Médecins vengés*, 1670, p. 95.

was without a penny, she was very precocious in her methods of money-getting. In 1638 she had a daughter by the Chevalier de Modène, an adventurer, and the child was recognized by its father, whose lawful wife was still living. Marie Hervé, Madeleine's mother, acted as godmother.

Madeleine Béjart was tall, good-looking, and red-haired. Molière fell in love with her, left all for her sake, and joined the company.

At the age of twenty-one, he became founder of the Illustre-Théâtre. Our proud Madeleine, whose bent was for the stage, was the head and front of the undertaking. It was in the house of her mother that the agreement was signed on June 30th, 1643. The newly formed company was in need of a house. Nothing was better suited to their purpose than some small resort with a racquet-court attached. The players rented a ball-court at Métayers, near the Porte de Nesle, but it was necessary to convert the court into an auditorium. While this work was in progress, the troop went to Rouen to perform there during the fair held at the celebrations of the *Pardon de Saint Romain.*

The Illustre-Théâtre, which gave tragedy oftener than comedy, drew but small houses at the Porte de Nesle. The associated players, attributing their want of success to the situation of the hall, which was at a distance from the well-to-do quarter, rented another in a better neighbourhood at the Port St. Paul, at the sign of the Black Cross. But their bad luck followed them. In the empty theatre the benches gave way beneath the load of debt. Molière who, as director, was responsible, was proceeded against for payment of a sum of a hundred and fifty-two livres, though the amount

was disputed. At any rate, Molière, at the instance of Master Chandler Fausser, and in default of payment, was committed to the Châtelet, but he was soon released, thanks to bail given by the Sieur Aubry, the King's paymaster.

What was left of the ill-starred Illustre-Théâtre combined with a company of comedians which the duc d'Epernon was taking with him into Guyenne.

Now at his seat at Cadillac, on the Garonne, and now at Agen, the duke provided theatrical performances for the entertainment of his Court. The duchess would be present, but it was really for Nanon de Lartigue that the entertainment was given.

In 1650, the troubles at Bordeaux forced the duc d'Épernon out of his Governorship. Thenceforth his players had plenty of time to parade themselves at the public fairs, and to attend the occasions when the Assemblies were held. It is not easy to follow them on their wanderings. We find Molière at Nantes in the month of April, 1648. It is known that he went to Vienne, in Dauphiné, but it is not known at what date.

In 1653 he is at Lyons, and in the same year, at Pézenas, he meets again with the Prince de Conti, with whom he had been fellow-student in his college days. The Prince had little recollection of the tapiser, now turned player. Madame de Calvimont, the Prince's mistress, who had her establishment at La Grange, was minded to see the comedians, and the Prince commissioned M. de Cosnac, who was the keeper of the purse for his private amusements, to see to it. M. de Cosnac learned that Molière and Béjart were in Languedoc, and ordered them to attend at La Grange. While

the company was making its arrangements in pursuance of this order, another company, that of Cormier, arrived at Pézenas. The impatient nature of the Prince de Conti led him to engage this latter troop; and Cormier, it seems, had made interest with Madame de Calvimont. M. de Cosnac made respectful representations to the Prince: "I have engaged Molière, and at your orders." But the answer he received was, "I have, since, engaged Cormier and his players; and it is more fitting that you should fail to keep your word than that I should fail to keep mine."

Molière, however, came. And when he found that he was not wanted, he asked that he should at least be paid his expenses. M. de Cosnac thought this was but just, but he could not make the Prince do the right thing. Such ill-procedure annoyed Cosnac to such a point that he made up his mind to put Molière and his comedians on the stage at Pézenas and to give them a thousand écus out of his own pocket rather than break his word to them. As a matter of fact, his hope was that when the Prince should learn that they were performing in the town, he might be touched in his vanity, and grant them one performance on the boards of La Grange. And that was what happened. "This troop," says Cosnac, "did not succeed, in its first performance, in pleasing Madame de Calvimont, nor, consequently, the Prince, although all the remainder of the audience held them to be infinitely better than Cormier's company, both in their merit as actors, and by the sumptuousness of their wardrobe." But some days later, they performed again, and Sarrazin, the Prince's secretary, spoke to such effect, and worked so on the Prince, that he

retained Molière and his players, and dismissed Cormier and his.*

From the 16th December to the 31st March, 1654, the Provincial Estates of Languedoc were assembled at Montpellier, and Molière's comedians went to that town to perform before these great gentlemen. They passed the greater part of the year 1654 at Lyons. The following year they were again at Montpellier for the fêtes given in honour of the Prince de Conti and his new princess, while the Estates were being held. While the carnival was in progress, Moliere and Joseph Béjart, in conjunction with actors from another company, and also with certain gentlemen who were sitting in the assembled Estates, danced the ballet known as the *Incompatibles* in presence of their Highnesses. In one scene Moliere appeared as a poet, while Béjart was a painter; in another Bejart was a drunkard Moliere a fishwife.

When the Estates had completed their session, Molière and his comrades went back to Lyons, their favourite resort. It was at this time, probably, that he gave *l'Étourdi*, his first piece. *L'Étourdi* was a draw, and the takings were good, if we may believe the Sieur d'Assoucy who shared the harvest, and could not bring himself to leave the company which provided him with funds. When they left for Avignon, the monarch of burlesque took ship along with them down the Rhône, and paid his way in jokes. "Since a man is never poor so long as he has friends," said he, "I, who am esteemed by Molière, and count among my friends Béjart and all his house, in the devil's despite . . . I am richer and happier than ever I was."†

* *Memoires de Daniel de Cosnac.*

† *Les Aventures de Monsieur d'Assoucy.*

The troop was playing at Avignon when it received commands to betake itself to Pézenas, whither the Prince de Conti had convoked the Estates for the session of November 4th, 1655.

The Prince and Princess de Conti were lodged in the town house of the Grand Provost of Guyenne, M. d'Alfonce, where the theatre was set up. "The Bishops of Beziers, of Uzes, and Saint-Pons, in rochet and stole, the barons of Castries, of Villeneuve and of Lanta, deputed by the Estates to carry their compliments to His Royal Highness the Prince de Conti, repaired to the mansion of M. d'Alfonce, where the said Prince was lodged The Prince de Conti received them at the door of the vestibule facing the court, and, having invited them within, told them that he could not help receiving them where he did because the reception chamber was in great disorder on account of the theatricals: whereon, their compliments were made."

The prelates, who were kept kicking their heels in the vestibule in full canonicals, while actors occupied the inner apartments, were well capable of avenging themselves. Pavillon, the Bishop of Aleth, was at Pezenas, at the same moment as Molière. He sat among the assembled Estates, and took the occasion to wake the Prince's conscience, and inspire him with the fear and avoidance of all bad company. Now Pavillon, the Jansenist, held that there was no worse company than players. He refused absolution not only to actors, but to their audiences. Fortunately for Molière and his troop, the Prince's conversion was not wrought in a moment, and while grace was operating the comedians grew fat at the expense of the Estates.

They soon felt the result of the sentiments instilled into the Prince's soul by the Bishop of Aleth.

From Pézenas, true country of Cockaigne, the comedians and their baggage, not forgetting Assoucy, came to Narbonne. They stayed at Béziers during the session which opened there, November 17th, 1656, and Molière put on the boards his *Dépit Amoureux*, which was imitated from the *Interesse* of Nicolo Secchi. By way of Montpellier, Nîmes, Avignon, and Orange (in all likelihood) the players reached Lyons, where they once more found their patron, the Prince de Conti. But since the days at Pézenas the Bishop of Aleth had had his way with that sinful soul. The Prince wrote to the Abbé de Ciron: "There are players here, a company formerly mine. I have let them know that they must leave, and you may believe me I have carefully avoided them."

When ill-luck visits us, the happier hour may be near at hand. The company being thus rebuffed betook itself to Dijon, and there found its earlier patron, the duc d'Épernon, now Governor of Burgundy. From Dijon it went south again and performed at Avignon. Here Molière fell in with Mignard, the painter, and formed friendship with him.

The players passed the carnival of 1658 at Grenoble. Then it was that Molière's friends—and he had influential friends by now—counselled him to approach the capital. When Easter was gone by he set up at Rouen, to give his well-wishers time and occasion to work his introduction to Court. With an eye to establishing himself in Paris, he stayed there quietly for a little while. Madeleine Béjart exerted herself with the same

purpose. On July 12th, 1658, a deed was executed at Rouen whereby the Comte Louis de Talhouet ceded to her his occupation of the Marais tennis-court, at Paris, with all the boxes and theatrical scenery. In this deed Madeleine Béjart is described as domiciled at Paris "in the house of M. Poquelin, tapiser, *valet de chambre* to the King." So the father had forgiven his son for having turned actor and playwright.

"The Sieur de Molière and his company," writes La Grange at the head of his register, "arrived in Paris in the month of October, 1658, and entered the service of Monsieur, the King's only brother, who honoured them with his protection and with the official style of His Comedians, and therewith a pension of three hundred livres for each player." And the register bears in the margin the following: "*Note* that the 300 livres have not been paid."* Nevertheless, the protection of Monsieur had its value. It made it possible for Molière to appear on the 24th October, 1658, before the Queen-Mother and the King on a stage set up in the guard-room at the old Louvre. The play was *Nicomède*.

The new players, says the *Préface* of 1682, did not fail to please, and the attractions of the women players and their acting gave particular satisfaction. The tragedy over, Molière "came before the scene and having thanked His Majesty in a very modest manner for his goodness in overlooking the failings of himself and all his company, who had come in fear and trembling to face so august a gathering, he said that so desirous had they been of the honour of affording some pleasure to the greatest

* *Registre* de La Grange.

monarch in the world, that they had forgotten that His Majesty had at his disposal originals of an excellence of which they could only furnish a very feeble imitation; but since He had condescended to have patience with their country bearing and rustic address, he would very humbly beg His Majesty to lend his countenance to a little entertainment of a kind that had won them some small reputation and had been found pleasing, in the provinces."

His complimentary address was so well turned and so well received, that all the Court applauded it, and there was still more applause for his little comedy, the *Docteur Amoureux*—or the Doctor in Love. It amused and surprised every one. The Doctor was played by Molière. This farce, the *Docteur Amoureux*, which its author allowed to perish, was one of those composed during the visit to Languedoc. It can hardly have been a bad farce, since Boileau regretted its loss, and it was from Molière's hand.

The King was pleased with his Brother's company of players, and gave them, by way of recompense, the Petit Bourbon hall to perform in, alternately with the Italian Comedy. The hall, which was of very great size, opened off the Louvre; so that they were virtually in the royal apartments.

The public performances given the town by the new company, opened on November 2nd, with a tragedy of Corneille, and it is not a solitary example of Molière's fancy for donning the buskin. But his speech was affected by a catch in his utterance which unfitted him for heroic parts, and their success was not great until he gave his *Étourdi* and the *Dépit Amoureux*, which were new to Paris. At

least, Chalussay is pleased to say so, when he tells us in the person of *Élomire :*

"I came, preceded by my new renown,
And gained the Salle de Bourbon for my own.
There, with *Heraclius*, we opened house,
Hoping a ready worship to arouse.
Alas—how unforeseen! Our hopes, belied,
See no one charmed, but all dissatisfied;
And this attempt I thought a masterstroke,
Had well-nigh made me all attempts revoke.
I tried again, and making bold display
With speech and placard, did what in me lay.
But all in vain, I could not change their tune.
After *Heraclius* they hissed off *Rodogune*.
Cinna the same, The *Cid*, to our regret,
As well as *Pompey*, with like treatment met.
Affairs so bad, nor knowing how to mend 'em,
I sometimes thought to hang myself and end 'em.
But, by a madcap stroke, in purest sport,
Instead of found'ring, found myself in port;
Leaving the great Corneille for something less
I gave *l'Étourdi* with immense success.
The play was scarce begun, nor had I far gone
Halberd in hand with my amusing jargon,
Shown my coat, hat, beard, and ruff, and all,
When tempests of delight awoke the hall. . . ."

The malicious wag is obliged to own that *l'Étourdi* was heard with pleasure, and that Molière was received with plaudits both as author and actor.

In 1659, at Eastertide, the company being invited by the Maréchal de la Mailleray to the Château de Chilly, gave the *Dépit Amoureux* in presence of the King, Monsieur his brother, the nieces of Cardinal Mazarin, and the Queen's maids of honour. The performance pleased the King, for on the 10th May Molière was playing *l'Étourdi* at the Louvre.

Some months later, at the end of 1659, Molière

gave the *Précieuses Ridicules*, the first of his works in which contemporary manners were depicted, for so far he had only given masques. In this first venture he assailed an influential group of society.

"The piece tickled many," says Loret, "the wise as well as the foolish." And the gazetteer says:

> "I went, and paid my thirty sous,
> But had such feast of pleasant wit,
> For thirty francs I had been quit" *

A certain personage, who moved in inner circles, had enough weight, it appears, to stop the performance for some days. But the piece, continued again on December 2nd, had unbounded success. Molière's enemies, by way of comforting themselves, declared that the whole thing was due to his drollery as the comic actor; and Saumaise, in his preface to the *Précieuses ridicules nouvellement mises en vers*, allowed that Molière might boast of being "the most farcical player in France."

Public enthusiasm for the *Précieuses ridicules* was real and lasting. It had not diminished by the time of the reopening after Easter, 1660. On the 29th July it was performed before the King at Vincennes, and on the 30th August following at the Louvre for Monsieur the King's brother.

The King witnessed it again at the Louvre on the 21st October, and yet again, five days later, at Cardinal Mazarin's. Here is what Loret had to say of the performance:

> "The players of His Highness the Prince
> Had a good day not long since,
> For the Cardinal, as it befell
> Who had not been feeling well,

* *La Muse historique*

When pain gave him interval
Bade them, not into the hall,
But the better to content him
In his own room—they present him
Nothing at all of your tragic stuff
But two comedies pleasant enough,
L'Étourdi, to wit, as it is called,
Which often has held me enthralled,
And the Marquis de Mascarille
Who is only a marquis at will—
Wherein every line of the play
Holds something to make one feel gay,
And many folk very high placed
Found both plays were quite to their taste,
And by his particular care
For the author, good Molière,
This most generous Eminence
Made bestowal, in recompense
To him and to all who are in his
Troupe, of a handful of guineas. . . ." *

The Cardinal was ill, and in his chair. The King stood, resting on the back of the chair.

He ordered a gratuity of three thousand livres to be given to the company. Molière gave his *Cocu imaginaire* on May 28th, 1880. And thereafter His Highness's players met with a reverse that La Grange speaks of as a *bourrasque* or sudden squall, and which came, we may allow, like a storm from a clear sky. M. de Ratabon, supervisor of the Royal buildings, had the Petit Bourbon theatre pulled down, without advising the comedians, who were painfully surprised.

Their complaints reached the King's ear. But

* *La Muse historique*, 30th Oct., 1660. It is the first time that the Gazetteer names the poet and the way the name is written (Molier, rhyming with particulier) shows that it was pronounced *Molié*.

Monsieur de Ratabon replied that "the site of the hall was wanted for the buildings at the Louvre, and that as the fittings of the hall had been put up for the King's ballets, and belonged to His Majesty, he had not thought it necessary to let consideration for the players stand in the way of the designs for the Louvre." Whereupon La Grange notes, in his register, that Monsieur de Ratabon's ill-natured intentions "are obvious." But Monsieur, desirous of repairing the wrong done to his comedians, asked for the Palais-Royal hall for them. The King granted it to them, and M. de Ratabon was instructed to effect necessary repairs. La Grange enters in his register another counterblast which, like the preceding ill-wind, was quickly to blow them good. On this occasion the ill-wind blew from the Marais quarter, from the comedians of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, who tried to gain over certain members of Monsieur's company. "But," says La Grange, "the players of His Highness stood firm; all the actors were attached to the Sieur de Molière, their leader, who had, in addition to his extraordinary merit and capacity, an attractiveness and candour of disposition which led them all to declare to him that they would share his fortunes and would never abandon him, whatever proposals were made them, and whatever advantages might offer elsewhere."*

This says much in praise of Molière, and there can be no further doubt of his goodness of heart and high-mindedness.

While M. de Ratabon was pulling down the Petit-Bourbon, and doing up the Palais Royal, the company, without quarters for the moment, played

* *Registre* de La Grange.

at the Maréchal de la Mailleraye's, and at the houses of La Basinière, the treasurer, the duc de Roquelaure, the duc de Mercœur, and the Comte de Vaillac.

The Palais-Royal hall was handed over to the company in the early days of 1661. It was of great size and very fine. Cardinal Richelieu had used it for the production of the tragedy of *Mirame*, and had given magnificent performances there. His Highness's players opened it on January 20th, 1661, with the *Cocu imaginaire*, which was a success. Then the *Précieuses* was revived, and brought in much money.

On February 4th Moliere gave *Don Garcie, Prince de Navarre*, a tragi-comedy whose subject is from an Italian comedy of Cicognini's, or imitated by Cicognini from the Spanish, and this failed. When it reached its seventh performance the receipts had fallen to seventy livres. Molière withdrew the piece. He was forced to say farewell to Melpomene, and measure himself no more against the author of Don Sancho, a renunciation which must have cost him something, for the Tragic Muse was his love.

He resumed the comic sock and gave the *École des Maris* on the June 24th, 1661. The favours of Thalia amply avenged the disdain of Melpomene. *L'École des Maris* was played without interruption from the 24th June to the 11th September.

Loret, in his gazette, speaks of the "conception so taking and so charming" which is "the delight of all Paris." This time Molière, as Nicolas says, captured every one's good word. And he had his play printed. *L'École des Maris* is the first work of his that he put forth under his own hand, as he

says in the address to Monsieur which stands at the head of this comedy.

Two months after this he produced a new piece which he had been pressed to write for the fête given the King by the *Surintendant*, Fouquet. In the foreword to the *Fâcheux* the poet says: "Never was so precipitate an undertaking as this seen upon the stage; it is something new, I well believe, that a comedy should be conceived, written, learnt, and produced, and all in fifteen days."

Truth to tell, what the *Surintendant* wanted from Moliere was less a play than a series of scenes suitable for the introduction of the ballet movements Louis XIV so much delighted in. The *divertissements* for which the piece made a framework were marshalled by Beauchamp. Le Brun left the Campaigns of Alexander, to paint the scenery. Torelli did the stage machinery, and Pellisson composed the prologue.

Les Fâcheux was given on August 17th, 1661, in the gardens of Vaux, before the King's Majesty. The Queen was with child, and could not bear him company. But a crowd of Princes and noblemen, Monsieur, Madame, and the Queen-Mother, lent their presence at the fête. Molière, in his *Avertissement*, tells us himself that "as soon as the curtain rose he appeared on the stage as a gentleman of the town, and addressing himself to the King, and speaking as one surprised, began to make excuses for his unsupported appearance, and for his lack of time and the necessary company which should have afforded His Majesty the amusement he seemed to expect." At the same moment, a rock, from which sprang a score of watery sprays, changed to a shell, and thereout came Béjart as a naiad.

All thought her charming, and she became the theme of verse:

"Of fairer nymph you ne'er heard tell
Than Bejart—when, the other day
She showed herself within her shell
All who saw her needs must say,
Saw her thus within her shell,
'Venus' self has come this way.'"

This nymph and Venus, on her mortal side, knew forty-three summers. She recited Pellisson's prologue. Then *Les Facheux* was given, a perfect all-round performance, and received with frequent applause. The King, as it appears, was exceedingly delighted with the fun made in the play of some of those in his train who were applauding their counterfeit presentments without seeing the likeness.

La Fontaine, who was present at these fêtes at Vaux, wrote to his friend Maucroix five days afterwards, a letter, part prose and part verse, wherein Molière is valued at his just worth:

"This writer's style
Charms, at the moment, all the Court.
His name is known to all, in short,
By now it's left e'en Rome behind.
It gives me joy, he's to my mind.
For was he not our whilom choice,
When we agreed, with single voice,
In France once more should find abode
The style and taste that Terence showed?
Plautus is naught but a buffoon,
And never was it such a boon
Before the boards to sit awhile;
For now no longer need we smile
At jaded tricks we used to see,
Found good *in illo tempore.*

For now has Fashion changed her ways.
Jodelet * is no more the rage
And nothing now received as good
But follows Nature's every mood."

The King had pointed out to the poet that there was a type of *Fâcheux*, the terrible sportsman to wit, whose portrait was lacking in the collection. M. de Soyecourt, it was said, the Master of the Robes, was the original. Molière did not fail to work on a suggestion coming from so high a quarter, and on August 25th, his birthday, Louis had the pleasure of seeing *Les Fâcheux* once more, at Fontainebleau, enriched with the portrait he had himself sketched out.

The town had to wait a long time for *Les Fâcheux*, after the arrest of Fouquet, the *surintendant*. This was prudence, in view of the Court. And another reason for the delay was that it was not easy to stage such a play, with its "ballets, violins, music and set-pieces" at the Palais Royal. *Les Fâcheux* was given in public on the 4th November, and for three months drew large houses.

The register of La Grange lets us know, in a very brief entry, that "M. de Molière married Armande-Claire-Elizabeth-Gresinde Béjart, on Shrove Tuesday, 1662."

Molière's father put his signature to the contract.†

Some have found amusement in pointing out that, at the time of the wedding, Molière was winning plaudits in *l'École des Maris*. The bride was about twenty years of age, the bridegroom a

* Scarron.

† The *Register* of La Grange post-dates the marriage one day; it was celebrated on the Monday, the 20th February, at St. Germain-l'Auxerrois.

little over forty. Nothing is known for certain about this Armande Béjart, and official documents which mention her, the marriage certificate, and the certificate of death, far from enlightening us, leave us in doubt.

Enemies of Molière have accordingly indulged in dark suspicions. The truth is matter for comedy, and quite in the style of the Italian imbroglio; supposititious children, elopements, recognition at the eleventh hour, guardians in love, wards who meet them half-way, all the unreal intrigue of the Italian and Spanish repertory that Molière wove into his early works. Armande Béjart was probably the "unbaptized child" numbered, in a deed, among the younger children of Joseph Béjart, but really daughter to Madeleine Béjart. Why should Madeleine attribute this offspring of her amours to her own mother, then no longer young? Why would she have her daughter set down as her sister? She did not mind acknowledging her children when the father was a Seigneur de Modène. Perhaps Armande was of lesser quality. The writer of the *Fameuse Comédienne* says that Madeleine "was the joy of a number of young men in Languedoc at the time of her daughter's birth." In this happy confusion, our little Armande could not be treasured by her mother as token of some glorious fault. Still, if we are to believe the author of the *Fameuse Comédienne*, who seems well-informed, the child was nursed in Languedoc under the care of a lady of high rank. In this case we must believe that her father was a man of quality. Molière took her with him when he went to Lyons And she must have been the little Menou Chapelle speaks of, in a charming letter written to Molière.

Chapelle, who can communicate to a friend the delight of April in the fields, wrote:

"Every charm of the country-side is putting forth and increasing in beauty, the green carrying all before it, and promising us very soon the leafage whose lack we begin to complain of as soon as the heat is here. That will not be just yet, however, and for this trip we must content us with the green that carpets the ground and to address you in terms more worthy—

"Weakly yet, must creep and go
Where the meadow-grasses grow,
Wanting, yet, the strength to strain
Upwards where the willow, fain,
Stoops her branches low.

Boughs that tender blossom yield,
Dewy buds that leafless blow
Praying for a leafy shield,
Weeping, jealous of the field,
Hoping, daily now, to see
Her green robe attain the tree."

And Chapelle adds:

"These beautiful verses are only for you and Mademoiselle Menou. You and she, moreover, are figured forth in them. . . ." *

Menou followed the comedy company and played small parts. This much is certain, that in Molière's day no one had any doubt that Armande was Madeleine's daughter. I will not quote Racine's letter to his friend Le Vasseur. There is no difficulty in referring to it. I will merely give this note from Brossette: "I have heard from M. Despréaux that Molière was originally in love with Béjart, the *Comédienne*, whose daughter he married."

Armande had grace and good looks. Grudging

* *Lettre écrite de la campagne à M. de Molière.*

people, who denied her beauty at any time, had to admit that it was not in vain that she sought to please. "Little Béjart," it is said, in the *Fameuse Comédienne*, "still lacked, until she grew up, the ways and the address which, though she had no actual beauty, recommended her so strongly to the taste of many people." And there was general agreement on the point that that she "was ravishing as Psyche."

Molière, now a married man, created the character of Arnolphe, and gave the *École des Femmes*, which was produced at the Palais Royal on December 26th, 1662. Mademoiselle de Brie played Agnès. Of all Molière's plays this was the best received and the most run after. The register of La Grange lets us know the extraordinary receipts from the performances following the first production up to the Easter interval of 1663, and, thereafter, up to August in the same year.

It was played before the King, and for Madame. It was dedicated to Madame when printed. He thought that the name of so great a princess would be a protection for his work, which was furiously assailed. The religious maniacs scented their enemy. They denounced Arnolphe's sermon as abominable impiety. But the King was young, amorous, and loved the play, and he let the bigots howl.

Molière had enemies besides the bigots. He had those that celebrity always brings, and they are innumerable. He answered their attacks with a comedy, and so, to his own advantage, carried the dispute on to the stage. The *Critique de l'École des Femmes* was performed for the first time on June 1st, 1663.

Donneau de Visé, in his comedy *Zélinde*,* which did not appear, and in his *Critique de la Critique*, made what answer he could. Boursault wrote his *Portrait du Peintre*. Such temerity may be pardoned in an author who was but twenty-five. The *Portrait du Peintre* was performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. Molière went to see it, and boldly faced his own portrait. They say he replied to an inquisitive person, who asked him what he thought of it, by this line from the *École des Femmes*:

"... Moi j'en ris tout autant que je puis."

Nevertheless, he retorted with *l'Impromptu*, which was played towards the middle of October. He was very careful to proclaim, in the play itself, that he had written it at the King's command. In this manner he enrolled Louis in his defence. And Louis was, in fact, pleased with the *Impromptu*, for we find on his pension list for 1663: "To the Sieur Molière, excellent comedic poet, a thousand livres."

On January 10th, 1664, Mademoiselle Molière, the poet's wife, brought a boy into the world, who

* Here is a passage from *Zélinde*, where Molière is depicted under the name of Élomire:

"Since my appearance, Élomire had not spoken a word. I had found him leaning over a stall with the air of a man in a dream. His eyes were fixed on some three or four people of quality who were buying lace; he was all attention, listening to what they said, and the movement of his eyes seemed to search into their very souls to find what their lips did not tell him. I think he even had his tablets, and under cover of his cloak wrote down, without being observed, anything they said worthy of remark.... He is a dangerous character; there are some people who cannot keep their hands off things, but it may be said of him that his eyes and ears are all in all to him...." (*Zélinde*, Act V.)

was baptized "Louis," and held at the font by the duc de Créqui, who stood proxy for the King as godfather, and by the Maréchale de Plessis, acting for Madame as godmother. Thereafter any whispers against the actor's marriage were hushed.

Ten days after the birth of this son, who did not live, Molière composed the *Mariage forcé*, with eight ballets, in one of which the King himself appeared in the costume of an Egyptian. Molière, people said, was no longer Sganarelle, save on the stage.

From the 7th to the 14th May there were great festivities at Court. Entertainments were given in the Queen's presence for Mademoiselle de la Vallière, who five months previously had borne her first child.

"The ballet-movement wherein the King figured was arranged by M. de Saint-Aignan; it was entitled the *Palais d'Alcine ou les Plaisirs de l'Ile enchantée*. The second day of the fêtes, May 8th, Molière gave the *Princesse d'Élide*, in which Armande Béjart proved charming. The fifth day, May 11th, he gave the *Fâcheux*; and on May 12th, after the lottery, the first three acts of *Tartuffe*. It appears that the King did not see anything amiss, till his former preceptor, M. de Péréfixe, Archbishop of Paris, went out of his way to enlighten him. He begged him to safeguard his religion and to merit the title of the Eldest Son of the Church. The devout made shrill outcry, and the King, while allowing that the author had the best intentions, forbade the public performance of *Tartuffe*."

The poet read his comedy to Cardinal Chigi, the papal legate, who was then in France, and who was

not shocked, but, on the other hand, a priest in Paris, a certain Pierre Roullé, considered the author of the work "a demon clad in flesh and clothed as a man," and judged him worthy of exemplary punishment and even "of the fires of the stake, that foretaste of the fires of hell."*

The play, though forbidden the town, was allowed at Court. The first three acts were played again, September 25th, at Villers-Cotterets, where the King had gone to visit his brother, and the entire play was given on November 29th, at Raincy, at the Prince de Condé's. But Condé was no one to go by in questions of religious belief. Nine months after *Tartuffe* and its ban, Moliere gave the *Festin de Pierre*. It was judged worse than *Tartuffe*. The Prince de Conti, who had turned devout and become a pleader for his religion, exclaims in a book of his: "Can there be more open teaching of atheism than in the *Festin de Pierre*, where, after putting the most horrible impieties into the mouth of a witty atheist, the author commits the defence of God's cause to a lackey whom he makes utter, on its behalf, every kind of impertinence? And finally he seeks to justify his comedy, so crammed with blasphemy, under cover of a squib which he offers as the ridiculous implement of Divine vengeance."† The Prince de Conti is not altogether wrong, and the *Festin de Pierre* is not a work of edification. It put the King in a very awkward position. He loved the theatre, but he had his piety. He privately warned the poet not to continue his performances of the piece for long. At the same

* *Le Roi glorieux du Monde.*

† *Sentiments des Pères de l'Église.*

time he allotted him six thousand livres pension, and took over from his brother, the Prince, his company of players, which became the King's company. By his master's orders, Molière gave the *Amour médecin*, "suggested, executed, learnt and performed, in five days."

Herein he rallied the doctors, whom Don Juan, who scoffed at medicine as at all things, had already handled severely. He was ill, and they had not cured him. That was their offence. Molière, whose lungs were affected, coughed day and night. Men of goodwill even when ill believe in doctors, though they are not healed. But Molière was a scoffer. After much suffering, in the early part of the year 1666, he wrote the *Misanthrope*, which he gave at the Palais-Royal on June 4th of the same year. This masterpiece, on its first appearance, seemed somewhat dry. Receipts fell off from day to day, but after it had been given for twenty-one nights the *Médecin malgré lui* attracted the public once more. Then Molière worked again for the Royal pleasure. He inserted *Mélicerte*, the *Pastorale Comique*, and the *Sicilien*, into the ballet of the Muses. The Prince, pleased with this composition, awarded the players two years' pension, and sent Mademoiselle Molière and Mademoiselle de Brie two rich cloaks.

In the absence of the King who was indulging in the pomps of war in the Low Countries, Molière risked his *Tartuffe* on the boards of the Palais-Royal on August 5th, 1667. "The next day, the sixth," says La Grange in his register, "an officer came from the Court of Parliament, sent by Monsieur de la Moignon, the President, to stop the piece. . . . On the eighth," adds the register,

"Torillière, and I, La Grange, posted from Paris to interview the King on the matter of the prohibition. . . . We were very well received. Monsieur stood our friend, as ever, and His Majesty sent us word that on his return he would have the play looked over, and that it should be performed. We then returned. The journey cost the company a thousand livres." The poet, in the *placet* which he had sent by them to the King, urged that he had changed the play in many places. It was no longer called *Tartuffe*, but the *Imposteur*. Tartuffe became Panulphe, and appeared as a man of society with sword, ruffle, and lace.

The King, who loved his players and was afraid of losing Molière, who inclined to retire from the stage "if the Tartuffes got the upper hand," was nigh giving way, when the Archbishop of Paris published his decree of August 11th, 1667. Therein he forbade anyone in his diocese "to take part in, read or witness the said comedy, whether in public or private . . . under pain of excommunication." The King could no longer authorize the play, and Molière retired to Auteuil. He was not there for long. Led back by "La faveur d'un coup d'œil caressant"—being looked on once more with a kindly eye—he reopened his theatre on September 25th, with the *Misanthrope*.

On January 16th, 1668, at the Tuileries, before the King and the Court, he gave *Amphitryon*, already performed at the Palais-Royal on January 13th and 15th. The same year saw *George Dandin* and *L'Avare*. The 5th January, 1669, the King gave him leave to play *Tartuffe*.

He took advantage of the lately concluded "Peace of the Church" to abrogate the Bishop's

decree. All the town flocked to *Tartuffe*, and the pious Queen Marie-Thérèse had no scruple in witnessing a performance given in her private apartments.

The fêtes of Chambord in September and October, 1669, calling for their presence, the King's comedians there produced a new comedy by their leader, entitled *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*. This piece, played in town on November 15th, had the greatest success. And amusing it is, there is no doubt. Three months later the King's players are at Saint-Germain, where they give the *Amants magnifiques*, for which the King himself furnished the ground work. And he did not leave much to be embroidered on. In return for their tour and their visit to Chambord, Louis XIV gave the troupe a bonus of twelve thousand livres, divided into twelve parts, one part going to the author.

"On Friday, October 3rd, 1670," says La Grange's register, "the troupe left for Chambord at the King's orders. Among several other comedies was played the *Bourgeois gentilhomme*, a new piece by M. de Molière." It found favour, and the Turkish *divertissements* caused much laughter. They had been inserted, the King consenting, to ridicule the Envoy Extraordinary of the Grand Turk who had refused to be dazzled by the display of the illustrious Court amid which he found himself. Performed for the first time at the Palais-Royal on November 23rd, 1670, it became the delight of the town.

There was at the time, in the King's wardrobe, some scenery representing the infernal regions, and this had to be turned to account. The end of this

was that the King suggested to Molière the subject of *Psyche* and, as he could not wait, Corneille was pressed into the service. This resulted in the production of a masterpiece.

The *Fourberies de Scapin* was given for the first time to the town on May 24th, 1671.

For the Princess Palatine's marriage on November 21st of the same year, the King ordered a potpourri of all that had best pleased him in the various ballets given during the twelve month. Molière had to put together this *Ballet des Ballets*. On March 11th, 1672, the *Femmes savantes* appeared on the stage at the Palais-Royal.

Towards the end of the year a son was born to Molière, who, like the elder born, did not survive. A daughter was left him, Esprit-Madeleine. Molière was ill and depressed. According to Grimarest,* he unburdened his sorrows to his friend, Rohault, as follows:

"Though I have taken every precaution that a man may take, my life is got into that disjointed state where all who marry without reflection are sure to find themselves. . . . Yes, my dear Monsieur Rohault, I am the wretchedest of men . . . and I have but got what I deserve. I never thought that I was too cold a man for domestic companionship. I held that my wife should subdue her conduct to her proper virtue and to my wishes; and I am very conscious that in the situation in which she finds herself to-day, had she done so, she would be even more unhappy than I am myself. She is alert of mind, lively in disposition; she takes pleasure in giving play to her faculties; and in spite of myself I take umbrage. I find cause of complaint, and I

* Grimarest, *Vie de Molière*.

complain. This woman, a hundred times more reasonable than I, would enjoy her life; she goes on her way, and, confident in her innocence, disdains the precautions I would impose on her. Her neglect takes on the colour of contempt, in my sight; I want evidence of kind feeling, that I may know it does exist; and ask for more control in her behaviour that my mind may be at ease. But my wife, equable and unfettered in her conduct, which would be above suspicion for any husband less unnerved than I, has no pity for my sufferings, and fully taken up as she is with her general desire to please, like all women, without having any particular design, she laughs at my weakness. . . ." M. Rohault displays much sound philosophy for Molière's good, and to convince him that he is wrong to give way to his discontent. "Eh!" replied Molière, "I do not know how to philosophize about a wife who is lovable, as mine is; maybe, were you in my place, you would know worse moments than I."

In the month of February, 1673, Grimarest says that some friends tried to re-establish relations between Molière and his wife, and to induce a better agreement. It was very late in the day. Molière was making use of what vitality was left him to compose a farce which, for all the effort of the greatest of comic writers, is not gay—the *Malade imaginaire*. After this we know nothing with any certainty. I follow Grimarest, finding even more doubt and lack of truth in other places.

On February 17th, the day of the fourth performance, the poet made complaint, his wife being present:

"Though my life has known," said he, "as much

pain as pleasure, I counted myself happy; but now that I am borne down with trouble without being able to reckon on any relief or comfort, I see plainly enough that I must throw down my hand I can no longer make head against all the suffering and chagrin which give me no respite. What suffering a man must see before he dies!" he added. "But I feel that I am done for."

His wife, and Baron, much touched, begged him not to play, but to take a rest. "How can I?" he said. "Here are fifty poor fellows who live from day to day: what would they do if I did not play? So long as I can possibly do it, I should feel it a reproach that they were without bread for a day."

That evening Molière had great difficulty in performing his part. In the *Cérémonie*, as he uttered the word *Juro*, he felt a spasm. At the end of the performance, he wrapped himself in his dressing-gown, and asked Baron, in his box, what he thought of the piece. Baron spoke in praise of all the works he had produced, but, not caring for his looks, suggested that he was feeling worse. "It is true," replied Molière, "I feel mortally cold." Baron felt his hands, which were icy, and put them in his muff to warm them, for it was the fashion then for men to carry muffs. Baron sent for carriers for the sick man, and accompanied his chair from the Palais-Royal to the Rue de Richelieu, where Molière lodged.

Once in his room, Baron pressed some broth upon him, for Madamoiselle Molière, who took great care of herself, always had some ready for her own consumption. He refused. "My wife's broth," he said, "is brandy to me—you know all the stuff

she mixes with it—give me a little Parmesan cheese." La Forest, his servant, brought it, and he ate it with a little bread. Then he was put to bed.

A moment before he sent them to ask his wife for a pillow filled with some herbs which she had promised should make him sleep.

"I do not mind trying," he said, "anything that does not make its way inside me. Whatever I am asked to take internally, frightens me. A very little would rob me of what life is left me."

A moment later he was taken with a violent cough, and he spat, and then asked for a light. "A change has come," he said. Baron, seeing the blood he had thrown up, cried out in alarm. "Do not be frightened," said Moliere. "You have seen me worse. All the same," he added, "tell my wife to come up."

Baron went to look for Mademoiselle Molière, and Molière was left with two nuns.

"They were such," says Grimarest, "as ordinarily come to Paris to collect alms during Lent, and they had known his hospitality. They gave him during his last moments the succour that it became them to give, and that was to be expected of their charity; and he evinced to them the disposition of a good Christian, and the resignation that is owed by all to the will of the Lord. He expired at length in the arms of those good sisters; the blood which issued in quantity from his mouth suffocated him. And when his wife and Baron came upstairs they found him dead.

On Tuesday, February 21st, 1673, at nine o'clock at night, took its way the funeral procession of Jean-Baptiste-Poquelin-Molière, tapiser, *valet de chambre* to the King, and celebrated comedian.

Four priests bore the corpse in its bier covered with the tapisers' own pall; six children carried each a light in a silver candlestick. Footmen carried lights of white wax. The body was borne to the cemetery of Saint-Joseph, and laid at the foot of the Cross under a handful of consecrated earth "obtained by begging for it."

JEAN RACINE



ICHELIEU was putting the finishing touches on the unification of France. Corneille had produced his *Cid*, and Descartes his *Discours de la Méthode*. In the same year that saw the tragedy of *Horace* there lay crying in its swaddling clothes a child who was to be the poet of *Andromaque* and *Athalie*.

Jean Racine, born at la Ferté-Milon, son of Jean Racine, attorney in the bailliwick, and of Jeanne Sconin, was baptized on December 22nd, 1639. Jean, his grandfather, had been superintendent of Excise, and Jean, his great-grandfather, receiver of King's taxes in the domain and duchy of Valois and controller of the salt reserves at la Ferté-Milon and Crépy-en-Valois, held letters-patent of nobility. The Racines had their arms painted on the windows, in their house in the Rue de la Pescherie: their device was a rat and a swan argent on a field azure. But the painter had transformed the rat into a wild boar, and a lawsuit was the result. The poet, Jean Racine, eventually suppressed the rat, or the boar, and exhibited only the swan argent on a field azure.

The family lived in an atmosphere of provincial austerity, and the daughters of the house had often taken the veil. The Jansenists were held by them in high esteem. The Vitarts, who were connected

with the Racines, had given a home to the solitaries of Port-Royal when, in 1638, they were driven from their retreat. And Sconins had taken the habit, and furnished theologians to Saint-Geneviève's.

Jean Racine was but thirteen months old when his mother died in childbed and, when he was three, the death of his father left him to the care of his grandmother, Marie des Moulins, who, becoming a widow in 1649, retired to Port-Royal. Jean was then sent to college at Beauvais, where he remained six years, under masters with strong Jansenist sympathies. He was sixteen when, through the influence of his grandmother and his aunts, who lived at Port-Royal, he was admitted by Nicole and Lancelot to the school at Les Granges. He studied his humanities within those austere walls, and learnt Greek under the teacher who wrote:

> " ce jardin, non de fleurs,
> Mais de racines nourissantes
> Qui rendent les ames savantes " *

Racine was an orphan: Port-Royal was his home. M. Lemaistre called him son. Nicole was one of his masters, and we know how kind a heart was his. The solitaries of Port-Royal had from now onward an additional attraction, namely, the glamour of misfortune. They suffered persecution; their schools were broken up. The three years in these sacred solitudes imbued Racine's soul with a love of Jansenism, which gained the mastery in his declining years.

In his hours of recreation Lemaistre's scholar

* That garden, not of flowers, but of all nourishing roots which give knowledge to the soul. (Preface to the *Jardin des Racines grecques.*)

would wander in the abbey woods musing upon Sophocles and Euripides, whom he knew by heart. He celebrated in verse the fields and the woods and the waters that surrounded the monastery. A secluded and religious upbringing has singular charms for such young and ardent souls as are not stifled by it. The cloister affects minds too broad or too restless completely to brook its restraint, with a strange malady that has delights of its own; a sickness of strange visions, the dangerous faculty of confusing the real with the dream, with ghosts, and fair images, and of losing itself in the fathomless inane. When within those walls, where all seemed to confirm his words, M. de Saint-Cyran declared that Virgil had lost his soul because of the beauty of his verse, he must, in the eyes of a sensitive young scholar, have invested the shade of Dido with melancholy and delicious charm. To the voluptuary, religion brings one sensuous pleasure more, the charm of losing one's immortal soul.

They say that the young imagination of the poet, in the silence of the study-rooms and in the peaceful chapel, stirred to the words of the love-tale of *Théagène et Chariclée*. Poets may see fair visions float before them long ere they have power to give them shape and being.

Racine was nineteen when he left Port-Royal to pursue his course of philosophy at the Collège d'Harcourt. A little later he established himself near his uncle Vitart, at the Hôtel de Luynes, where he breathed the common air of the outer world. At that time he consorted much with a little abbé who had "a very susceptible heart, open to the soft emotions of love." Le Vasseur ran much after actresses, and his white habit of Saint-

Jean-des-Vignes was often to be seen in the alleys and by-ways. Uncle Vitart had a weakness for madrigals and gallantries in general; and lent money to his nephew "whose means were less than modest." Racine wrote versicles, visited his *cabaret* two or three times a day, and was in a fair way to become a fashionable wit. While leading this sort of life he composed an ode on the King's marriage: *La Nymphe de la Seine.*

Vitart took it to Chapelain, who had the keys of the royal cash-box. Chapelain objected to the appearance of Tritons in a river. Racine expunged the Tritons, and received a gratification.

A young king of twenty-two, ignorant, haughty, and self-willed, obstinate, now wielded a power that the age-long, patient labours of his forbears had rendered absolute. Louis XIV loved women and he loved power; later, he was to love gardens and buildings and perigrinations in his royal coach. From the time of his marriage he amused himself and his nobles with ballets and merry-making, and early set up, for the imitation of stage-poets, the pomps and gallanty-show of his Court.

About this time Racine wrote for the stage two pieces now lost: *l'Amasie*, which was written for an actress of the *Marais*, and *Les Amours d'Ovide*, for which the actress Beauchâteau had furnished the notion, wherefore the poet called her in gallant sort, "la féconde Julie d'Ovide." Womenkind finished what Port-Royal had begun: when their turn came they fashioned this so happy intelligence. They developed in him the harmony and adaptability, the fine feeling, the deep understanding of the human heart, which was the better part of his genius. Women were then what French society

had made them; coquettes, high-handed, and imperious. Established manners brought into a decent man's conduct with women a certain reserve, a polish, an intellectual relationship, which even in the lighter affairs of love made demand upon all, and the most varied, resources of mind and thought.

There was a neighbour of Racine's whom he often visited in those days, Jean de La Fontaine, who was living on the Quai des Augustins. But the young man's aunts, who were informed of his vagaries, launched from Port-Royal "excommunication on excommunication," but in vain, until one day Jean, who sought means to repay his debts to M. Vitart, began to look about him for a benefice, and went to Uzès to find his uncle the Reverend Père Sconin, vicar-general and prior of the reformed canons of the Cathedral Church. This was in 1661, when Racine was twenty-two years of age. He even entertained the notion at one moment of taking orders. Still, he turned out for his friend Abbé Le Vasseur some rather free rhymes on the *Bains de Venus*, noticed the pretty girls in the church, annotated his Odyssey, and Olympics, turned the pages of the *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas, and, in particular, read his Petrarch.

Père Sconin, enmeshed in a network of ecclesiastical intrigues, could do nothing for his nephew, who returned empty-handed to Paris. Later on Racine obtained some secular benefices: he was made prior of Epinay, of Saint-Jacques, of la Ferté, and of St. Nicolas de Choisis. And he received, moreover, from 1664 onwards, some grants from the royal purse.

The year 1663 saw him at Court, and present at

the King's levee. The young poet was of an easy turn, and had the gift of pleasing. He could talk on any and every subject, but did not talk of his works. He was good-looking; his features were delicate, his countenance open and cheerful. His nose was sharp and pointed, a mocking nose, his mouth ironical and pleasure-loving, and his fine eyes easily softened to tears. He saw much of La Fontaine, as we have said. He had formed bonds of friendship with Boileau, and with Molière, to whom he gave his *Thébaide*, which was acted at the Palais-Royal. The takings were meagre. But this early piece, wherein the young Racine imitated Rotrou and Corneille while walking in the footsteps of Euripides, exhibited him as able in versification and capable of drawing character. This period saw Molière, La Fontaine, and Racine in company several times a week at Despréaux's, in the Rue du Colombier. With Chapelle, Furetière, and certain of the Court, they frequented the *cabaret* of the *Mouton Blanc*, near the cemetery of Saint-Jean, and the *Pomme de Pin* in the Rue de la Tricorne, and the *Croix de Lorraine*, where they made fun of many things, even of Chapelain's wig.

This good time did not last. Racine, who had entrusted his *Alexandre* to Molière and his theatre, found that the comedians of the Palais-Royal did not play the piece to his liking; he took it, without telling them, to the company at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, who learnt of it when the thing was done, and Paris saw two *Alexandres* at the same moment. Molière had reason to be annoyed, and annoyed he was. The young author had not been able to endure the thought that the loved creations of his fancy should be mishandled and his glory as

poet hidden under misrepresentation. The gift of taking impressions with very great vividness will lend an inconstancy, and even something that looks like treachery, to natures that are very sensitive and very fine in feeling. It is a great truth that the most delicate relationships are not the most lasting. Racine took away Mademoiselle du Parc from Molière, and that put the finishing touch to their quarrel. Mademoiselle du Parc was an actress from the Palais-Royal, whom Molière, they said, had loved without requital; she was handsome, and her age was thirty. Racine, who had more than amical relations with her, got her an engagement at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, where she filled the rôle of *Andromaque*. She died in childbirth not long after.

La Voisin accused Racine of poisoning her. He was seen in tears as he followed her funeral. The tears he shed on this occasion recall the touching words La Fontaine gives Racine in the *Amours de Psyche*, "Yes, we will weep for her . . . the heroes of antiquity were great weepers."*

His *Alexandre* had made Racine known as a poet at Court and in town. A pack of enemies, swelled by the number of Boileau's enemies and Corneille's friends, began to bay him, and they were to harass him to his dying day. The poet was of a kind easy to wound, but he could always retort in the sovereign style of a man who knows how to say anything he will. He knew only too well the dangerous art of provoking others. His mockery had point, and his stab was well planted. Men who are the most sensitive are none the more tender of others; the same nervous sensibility

* Αἰαῖοὶ δ' ἀριδάκρυτ ἄνδρες.

that moves them to cry at this thing, will make them laugh at that. The author of the *Alexandre* must needs engage in a quarrel which was to be followed by fervent repentance and penitent tears. Nicole in 1666, in his *Visionnaires*, had called the poets who wrote for the stage "public poisoners." Bossuet, who was no Jansenist, was no tenderer with them some years later. One does not go to the play to work out one's salvation, and Nicole's words are those of a doctor of the Church. To Racine, a poet and a Christian, it was of the first importance that Port-Royal should be wrong in the matter. He forgot that Nicole was his old schoolmaster, he forgot the *Saint Desert*. He took up the defence of the stage in two *petites lettres* which constitute the *Provinciales* of the poetic world. Racine uses argument and raillery with all the force and grace of Pascal. But Boileau, when he had read the second letter directed against Port-Royal, then subjected to persecution, said to his friend: "This is a very pretty bit of writing, but you do not reflect that it is written against the best people in the world." Racine did not print his second letter. In the conduct of his life he obeyed Boileau, who acted on plain and simple principles. And Boileau had great influence with him in poetical matters. Boileau was not a man of many ideas, but such as he had were very clear and easy of application. That is a great advantage in the government of men's minds. Men of very wide intelligence become entangled in infinite complexities, lose their way, find it again, stand in hesitation—they know what it is to doubt. And moments come when they follow the lead of lesser minds who have never known misgivings.

Andromaque was given for the first time at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, in November, 1667. Madame de Sévigné shed tears, and she was no lover of Racine. A tear fell from the lovely eyes of Henrietta of England, a pearl of great price for the poet. The public gave the tragedy attentive hearing. "Whether cook, cabman, stable-boy, lackey, or scullion, there is none but will hold forth about *Andromaque*."

Racine was still to be found at this period at the *Mouton Blanc*. The *Plaideurs* had its origin in this *cabaret*, situated in the Place du Cimetière Saint-Jean. He had lost some case or other "to which the judges had never lent proper hearing," and, supping in company with Boileau and Furetière, who were both well acquainted with the ways of lawyers, he conceived the notion of a farce for Scaramouche on the subject of legal chicanery. Scaramouche left Paris, and the poet made a comedy of the same matter for the players of the Hôtel de Bourgogne. It was not a great success at first. The leaders of taste were afraid *de n'avoir pas ri dans les règles*—of being amused by the wrong thing. But when the King had seen *Les Plaideurs* at Versailles, and had laughed, the town welcomed it with joy, and laughed frankly at the canine criminal and the tears of its family.

The following year, 1669, saw *Britannicus*. The body of the house was not crowded for the first performance, because the Place de Grève offered a counter-attraction in the execution of a malefactor. Old Corneille sat alone in a box. Some of his faction, such as Boursault, joined him there, and Corneille was warm in his disfavour. Racine thought it necessary to take up his own defence in

a preface, in the manner of Terence, as against the attacks of "a spiteful old poet, *malevoli veteris poetæ*." Hostility increased. The public was not enthusiastic. In vain did Boileau praise the *sententious* verse of the new tragedy. Several years were to pass before *Britannicus* met with a better reception, and due honour done to Racine.

When the theatre reopened after Easter, 1670, a new actress, who had only come to Paris a year since, understudied Des Œillets, then ill and near her end, in the part of Hermione. This actress was Marie Desmares, granddaughter of a president of parliament of Normandy, and wife to Champmeslé, the comedian. She was aged twenty-six, with small eyes and a bad skin, but with a good figure, fine carriage, and a sympathetic voice. Madame de Sévigné, who was a sort of stepmother to her, says that she was plain when seen near, but that when she spoke her lines she was adorable. She made her *debut* as an admirable Hermione, particularly excelling in scenes of strong passion. Her rival, who dragged herself to the performances, sighed as she left the house, "Des Œillets is no more." Racine visited Champmeslé in his box, to render his compliments "on both knees." He made up his mind to entrust her with the creation of the part of Bérénice, already in his mind. In the end he gave her Roxane, Monime, Iphigénie, and Phèdre.

This actress must have had great talent; her praise comes down to us from illustrious eye-witnesses. Boileau's lines we know:

> "Jamais Iphigénie en Aulide immolee
> Ne coûta tant de pleurs a la Grèce assemblée
> Que dans l'heureux spectacle à nos yeux etalé
> En a fait sous son nom verser la Champmeslé"—*

* Boileau, *Epître*, VII.

"Iphigenia in Aulis, and her woe,
Saw not the tears of Greece so freely flow,
As Champmeslé, when to the scene we came,
Caused ours to flow by playing in her name."

One cannot but remember with pleasure La Fontaine's very graceful dedication to Champmeslé of his tale of Belphégor:

"De votre nom j'orne le frontispice
Des derniers vers que ma Muse a polis.
Puisse le tout, ô charmante Phiis," etc.

"Your borrowed name lends lustre to this page,
My Muse's latest offering to the age.
May we, O charming Phyllis, hand in hand
Go down to Fame, and our joint praise withstand
The night of time—its spite we'll overreach,
I by my written word, you by your speech.
Our names conjoined win through the threat'ning shades,
You to reign long before your memory fades,
To reign in hearts that you may leave behind
After long sovereignty o'er human mind.

.

Lives any who is not beneath the spell
Of that clear, touching voice that can so well
Speak, as none other, to the listening heart?

.

I had surrendered wholly to your art
Had I presumed, in turn, to touch your heart—
But when we love we needs must ask return. . . ."

Champmeslé was smiled on. She was *la petite merveille*,* a Little Wonder, as a lady of the Court said. "The King of France and Mademoiselle de Champmeslé possess us entirely,"† said a poet. She was too free with her favours to please Ninon,

* Madame de Sévigné.
† *Lettre de La Fontaine.*

who threatened to have her chastised* by a certain gentleman of her service. Champmeslé did not pride herself on her marital fidelity. Her husband was no encumbrance; he was a man of parts, and collaborated with La Fontaine in the pleasant comedy of *La Coupe enchantée*. He was, seemingly, of the same mind as Thibault: "If I knew about it, should I be any the fatter?"†

His wife had gay supper parties, and there were *ces diableries* which Madame de Sévigné knew so much about. Excellent people such as La Fontaine, Boileau, and the Marquis de Sévigné, drank her champagne: Champmeslé took a hand, too. Racine found as much favour as any other, but not more than did many.

La Fontaine wrote in 1676 to Mademoiselle de Champmeslé: "Monsieur Racine prefers your charming self above all things." These easy ways lasted for some six or seven years. M. de Tonnerre spoilt it all. He found favour: he was a coward and a swindler, full of malice and evil tricks, and ill looked on. Racine, who was shortly to amend his life, gave way to him, and the jest ran that the Tonnerre had *déracinée*‡ the lady.

When the flight of time had brought inevitable change, and the Champmeslé was dying, at Auteuil, in her fifty-fourth year, the Christian poet wrote to his son that "the saddest thing was the obstinacy with which the poor woman refused to abandon the stage." Again, he wrote, when she, who had heard such wealth of praise and affection lavished upon her, was in her coffin: "I may mention that

* *Lettre de Madame de Sévigné.*

† *La Coupe enchantée*, sc. xviii.

‡ *Déraciner* = uproot, transplant.

I owe some reparation to the shade of the Champmeslé, who made a good death . . . repenting heartily of her past life, however regretful at leaving this world." There is scarcely occasion to doubt that the man who wrote thus had killed the old Adam in himself.

We have seen that in 1670 Racine was working on his *Bérénice*. The subject of the tragedy had been suggested by the young Duchess of Orleans, who had given it to Corneille and to Racine at the same time. Things of the mind had her serious attention; the first performance of *Andromaque* she had honoured with a tear; and the Muse of Racine had her love, a Muse as young as she, and as fresh blown as her earliest impressions.

Henriette would have seen consecrated in poetry, and delicately veiled, some memory of those days when she brought "joy and pleasure"* to Fontainebleau, returning on horseback from the baths, the King, her companion, and all her ladies following "in festal attire, their heads bearing a thousand plumes"—of those open drives by night along the canal side, to the sound of violins.† The King had begun by loving her, "and she would fain that he had retained an attachment for her which, losing its violence of love, should still preserve its graciousness and charm."

It gave her pleasure to see these dear impressions and innocent doings live again on the stage. Or, at least, would she have had the King, whom she was to have married in youth, and who had touched her heart at a later day, figured by the two poets in amorous and heroic guise; and it was perhaps from

* Madame de la Fayette, *Histoire d'Henriette d'Angleterre.*
† *Ibid.*

a sufficiently rare feeling of sentiment, thinking of Marie Mancini, her friend, that she chose Bérénice as heroine for the poem. For this niece of Mazarin's, whom Louis XIV sacrificed to interests of State, puts us in mind much more than does Henrietta of England, of the Queen of Palestine whom Titus loved and put from him against his inclination and hers.

The Duchess of Orleans never saw the two tragedies whose inspiration she had supplied. When *Bérénice* appeared at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, on the 21st November, 1670, Henriette had passed away "like the grass of the field."[1] She had been dead six months. Corneille's *Tite et Bérénice* was given the following week at Molière's theatre. It was badly played and it failed. Racine's beautiful elegy had a better welcome.

Bajazet appeared in January, 1672, at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, "in Turkish dress." During a performance of it Corneille said to Segrais, "I could not say it to anyone but you, because I should be thought to speak from jealousy; but, mind you, there is not a single character in *Bajazet* that speaks as he should, and as they speak at Constantinople." All Racine's enemies repeated that the Turks were not veritable Turks. Such as they were, they made their effect, and *Bajazet* held the stage. Corneille was not jealous, certainly, but he had no liking for these new pieces that took up the Hôtel de Bourgogne and drew crowded houses, forcing him to take his tragedies to the Marais theatre, where they were badly performed and not patronized by the public. As we have seen, Racine was impatient of the frowns of the grand old poet.

[1] Bossuet, *Oraison funèbre*.

We daresay that he spoke somewhat inconsiderately of him. But fifteen years later, after that October night that saw the last of Corneille, Racine spoke the praise of the great man before the Academy with a loftiness of eulogy that remains unsurpassed.

The Tragedy of *Mithridate*, given at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in January, 1673, was well received.

Racine entered the Académie française on July 12th the same year, sitting in the assembly in the vacated chair of La Mothe Le Vayer. It was about this time that the poet, by favour of Colbert, obtained the post of treasurer of France in the financial department of Moulins. A departmental treasurer took the style of chevalier and was entitled to be buried in gilt spurs. Louis XIV, who had been present at the conquest of Franche-Comte, fêted his return at Versailles in the summer of 1674. *Iphigénie* was performed for the first time at these fêtes, at a theatre erected in the Avenue de l'Orangerie. It was staged in a green alley adorned with rustic work, and fountains in shallow marble basins with gilded Tritons. The Court applauded it. Six months later *Iphigénie* was seen in town, where its approval was sustained, and many tears were shed. Racine had reached the most shining moment of his career. His enemies seemed borne down; the public, Condé, Moulimart, the King, were on his side; reason, and Boileau, were of his party.

But, even while he was busy at the theatre with the production of his *Phèdre*, his ruin was being plotted in high places. The conspiracy was laid at the Hôtel de Bouillon. Mancini was regent there, haughty, turbulent, overbearing. "She

knew much, talked well, was eager in dispute, and sometimes used the butt end of the pistol."*

The Duchesse de Bouillon prided herself on her making and unmaking of poets. The Duc de Nevers, her brother, was a wit; he rhymed with the negligent ease of a great gentleman, and Madame de Sévigné thought the world of his performances. The sister and brother were of the faction of Segrais and Benserade. They looked on Boileau as an enemy; they had no appreciation of Racine, and resolved his downfall. Madame de Houlières, their aged Muse, had provided them with a poet in his place: Pradon. This Pradon, who had a small talent, and was of an envious nature, had proclaimed impudent defiance of Racine in a preface to a thing called *Tamerlane*. He was just the man for them. They ordered a *Phèdre* from him; he busied himself about it, and with some help, it was ready in a few weeks. They had no Champmeslé, but so much the better! Racine would owe his success, did he have any, to his leading actress. Mademoiselle du Pini undertook the part, and Pradon's *Phèdre* was produced on January 3rd, 1677, by Guénégaud's company, two days after the first performance of Racine's *Phèdre* at the Hôtel de Bourgogne.

Mazarin's niece, who was versed in underhand methods, engaged all the boxes for both performances for the first six nights. The move cost her fifteen thousand livres, but it cost Racine useful support, and made the issue doubtful. The warfare was kept up by sonnets. One came from the Hôtel de Bouillon, composed after supper; Racine's friends answered it by one on the same

* Saint-Simon.

rhymes directed against the Duc de Nevers, and that with an ingenious cruelty that did the poet good service. The duke replied, still on the same rhymes, with threats of personal chastisement. There was even a rumour that Boileau had been thrashed in the streets by footmen. Thereupon the Prince de Condé grew angry, proclaimed Racine and Boileau his friends, and that "he could avenge any offence that might be put upon them." The Hôtel de Bourgogne remained dumb. Racine's *Phèdre* kept the stage, and Pradon's was driven off.

For all that Racine's enemies carried the day, Racine gave up the theatre. He was ever over-sensitive, irritable, quick to be discouraged. The lightest criticism had always caused him more annoyance than praise had given him pleasure. He was sore; he experienced the bitterness, the fullness of heart, the sickness with things which comes to the best of us, to such as bring the utmost love to their work. Men whose work is least open to the reproach of emptiness, are the very men who see most plainly the vanity of all things. The pride of the mind must pay in sadness and desolation of spirit.

Racine, moreover, was a Christian. He had been nursed in Jansenism. And now that youth was by, and with it gone the fair visions that attend the first steps on the path of life, desire in deceitful form, and pleasures novel, he felt that he was alone, wrapped in the omnipresence of a terrible God, and he was seized with fear, the fear for his salvation. Had he not lent his *Phèdre*, the last creation of his profane art, all the troubles, all the despair, of a Christian soul whom grace has failed?

He would have turned monk. He said, with

Rancé:* "I see no door where I may knock and return to God, save the door of the cloister; I have no resource, after so many errors, but to resume the frock and cord, and meditate my days in bitterness of heart." His confessor turned him from his purpose, and advised Christian marriage. Racine married, on June 1st, 1677, at the church of Saint-Séverin, Mademoiselle Catherine de Romanet, daughter of Jean-André de Romanet, Mayor of Montdidier, and departmental treasurer of France. Boileau and Nicolas Vitart were his witnesses. Mademoiselle de Romanet had never read Racine's tragedies: she was a gentle-natured and equable-minded person.

Since Racine, even though he reformed his life, did not follow Rancé and Madame de Longueville in their remorse and become dead to this world, it was natural enough, if one comes to think of it, that he should remain at Court, and attach himself to the King's service more than ever. To serve the most Christian King, is to serve God. To pay one's court was a way of paying one's devotion. Praise of the King was no profane laudation. Bossuet said so with no uncertain voice in the Sanctuary, and did not shrink from coupling the names of David and Louis as those of two men pleasing to the King of Heaven.

When Racine, at the end of 1677, was, along with Boileau, nominated historiographer to the King, owing to Madame de Montespan, he no doubt thought it his business to show how Providence worked through the King's instrumentality, and to recount the triumphs wrought by the Almighty through the arm of Louis.

* Abbé de la Trappe.

Not but that the poet was occasionally embarrassed by considerations other than for his soul's devotion. The innate art of taking without effort the tone of whatever company he might be in, the gift of pleasing, his accommodating humour, his aptitude for all things, made of the susceptible Jansenist a man of many uses, and he was caught up in a thousand toils in which he would not willingly have been engaged.

"He was acceptable everywhere, even at the King's bedside; the Duchesse de Bourgogne was delighted to see him at her table." He was to the liking of Madame de Montespan. He could not help his continuous favour; he had to set about an opera he had no heart to finish: he had to furnish madrigals to set forth the Miscellaneous Works of the Duc de Maine, aged seven: he must inevitably make others jealous, and find enemies still, always and on all sides.

His duties as historiographer compelled him to follow the King on his campaign. He visited Ghent in 1678, journeyed to Alsace in 1687; took part in the sieges of Mons and Namur, and finally in the campaign in the Low Countries. He wrote to Boileau, from the camp at Mons, on May 21st, 1692, after a review held by the King and M. de Luxembourg: "I suffered myself to be led on horseback without paying attention to anything, and my heart's wish would have been to see each and all in his house or under his humble thatch, with his wife and children, and myself at home in the Rue des Maçons with my family."

Racine had seven children by Catherine de Romanet: two boys, and five girls. The eldest of all, Jean-Baptiste, was quite a good little fellow

always, while in his eldest daughter the poet saw an image of himself that he could love. Marie Catherine's soul was impressionable and easily troubled. The strict but gentle rule of her father's house, the religion taught her, wherein love was mixed with salutary fear, aroused in her the longing for the cloister and its ecstasies. At sixteen she joined the Carmelites in the Faubourg Saint-Jacques. The father for all his piety was sorrow-stricken. She was attacked with a severe illness in her cell, and came back to her home, but only to meditate further retreat to Port-Royal, where, in fact, she went, but could not stay. The solitaries no longer received novices. She wrote her father letters which sorely touched and distracted him. She came back once more to the paternal roof, her health injured by her austerities, resolute to renounce the vanities of dress and to see no one. Little by little, she weakened in touching fashion, resumed her habits, and regained her smile, and that delicate spirit of delight so natural in a daughter of Racine. Her father saw her married some months before his death. The second daughter of the poet, and the prettiest, Anne—Nanette as her father called her—also acquired, with the Ursulines at Melun where she had been put when very young, a taste for the religious life and, in her case, it became a vocation and was followed unswervingly. She was professed when she was sixteen and three months. The father was present at the ceremony; he mourned his daughter on his knees, and she dared not turn her head towards him lest she should break down even while she surrendered her beautiful hair to the shears, held in the hands of the Bishop of Lens. Racine

wept; but was it not his hand that had led the child on the path of sacrifice, to the very altar where he saw her offered up? Had he lived a little longer, he would have seen two of his younger daughters, Babet and Fanchon, take the veil in their turn, and die to the world. The God of Jansenius whelmed the young heads in his dreadful shadow. And yet what treasure of intimate and innocent happiness was present in the poet's family! They would hold processions wherein the little girls were the clergy. Louis, whom they called Lionval, was priest, and the author of *Athalie* would sing, and bear the cross. A mounted messenger came one morning, bidding him dine at the Hôtel de Condé. The father sent for and showed a fine carp from the kitchen: "See for yourself," he said, "whether I can help dining with these poor children who had made me a feast to-day, and would find no pleasure in their dainties without me. I beg that you will lend this reason full weight with His Serene Highness."

Boileau sometimes had the little family with him at Auteuil. After a light and choice repast he would take Madelon, the youngest daughter, who was quick and full of fun, and Lionval, for a walk in the Bois de Boulogne—would threaten to lose them, and mingled his laughter with theirs.

Racine, twelve years after he had given up the theatre, composed his tragedy of *Esther* for Madame de Maintenon, who was foundress of the Maison de St. Cyr, where daughters of noble houses, "gathered from all parts of the kingdom,"* were brought up.

Madame de Maintenon wanted to "amuse her

* Preface to *Esther*.

little girls and the King."* She asked Racine for a play with verses that could be set to music. And it was to be edifying; *Andromaque* had been given to children for recitation, and they had put too much feeling into their parts. Racine brought his *Esther*. The subject was well chosen. To show an Esther providentially guided to the couch of a King whom she enlists in the interests of wisdom and truth; to parade her surrounded by the daughters of Sion whom it is her study and her care to train, was to hold in front of Madame de Maintenon a magic mirror of flattering kind. The first performance of *Esther* was given at Saint-Cyr on Wednesday, January 26th, 1689. The big dormitory vestibule on the second floor of the grand staircase *des Demoiselles* was chosen for the theatre. Benches ranged against the walls on each side of the stage were reserved for the little daughters of the community, who wore, according to age, sashes of red, green, yellow, or blue. Between these seats was a space for visitors. In the front row of seats was the King's arm-chair. The actresses wore beautiful Persian robes, adorned with pearls and diamonds, which had formerly done service in the King's ballets. The hall was lighted with crystal lustres; the scenery was painted by Borin, and Nivers, the organist of Saint-Cyr, was at the clavecin. Racine, who spoke verse well, had taught these innocent little actresses. They went down on their knees to recite the *Veni Creator* before they went on the stage. One of them, who played the part of *Élise*, forgot her lines. And the King was there. "Ah, Mademoiselle," said Racine, "what wrong you do my play!" The young

* Madame de la Favette, *Memoirs*.

thing wept! and Racine ran to her, dried her tears with his handkerchief, and wept with her.

Bossuet was present at this performance. He came again when it was given for the last time that season, when Madame de Sévigné saw it, too. She wrote: "Racine has surpassed himself; he loves God even as he used to love his mistresses." *Esther* pleased in every respect, motif, verse, music, and the performers, above all Mademoiselle de Villette, whose face in its too touching appeal, and whose attractive acting, caused disquiet to the directress of Saint-Cyr. The Court esteemed these performances as highly as did Louis and Madame de Maintenon. It was the great event of the year. Ministers left their most urgent business to lend ear to the young ladies of Saint-Cyr.

Racine wrote another tragedy for Saint-Cyr, *Athalie*. But the celebrations attending *Esther*, and the glittering light of society shed on school children brought up to religion, had shocked Madame de Maintenon's spiritual directors. Racine's enemies cried scandal. The King was growing old and more heedful of pious counsel. *Athalie* was declaimed by the children two or three times, at Versailles, in Madame de Maintenon's own room, in their Saint-Cyr uniform with some slight ornament of ribbons and pearls, in presence of the King, the princes of the blood, and a very few persons of station. And there were a few recitations even more discreet and unadorned given by the *Classe bleue* or upper form, and that was all. The play, kept quiet as it was, was laughed at by Racine's opponents, and the public never saw it. Racine when he changed his ways, made his peace with his early instructors. Nicole was the first to forgive

him, for it was Nicole whom he had most sinned against. He fell at the feet of Arnauld, and the great doctor knelt and embraced the repentant poet. He would often go to Port-Royal, and every year he took his family thither for the procession of the Blessed Sacrament; he was present at the translation of the heart of Arnauld, who had died in exile; and he left Versailles at the first rumour of Nicole's being struck down with apoplexy. He was entrusted with delicate missions on behalf of the community, wrote for them, and conferred with the Archbishop of Paris.

Such attachment as this to men who, in the King's eyes, were proud spirits and even rebels, gave scandal at Court, and Madame de Maintenon was not the woman to protect a Jansenist. If it be true that Boileau, who knew no concealment, did not conceal his respect for the solitaries of Port-Royal, that surly man would hardly have annoyed people by his unaccommodating ways, because such ways were expected of him, and were what people liked in him. But the least independence in conduct or word causes the surprise and irritation of deception when met with in a nature which has hitherto and invariably done everything to please.

Racine afforded to Louis other ground for displeasure; it remained long in the background, a state secret as it were, and is only known to us by a family tradition. The poet, at the request of Madame de Maintenon, who knew he could turn his hand to anything, had drawn a memorial setting forth the misery brought upon the people by the wars. She was reading it when the King came in, who took it from her, read a few lines, and asked who had written it. She at first said that she had

promised secrecy, but Louis XIV exacted obedience even from the women he loved. When he learnt that it was Racine who had written the memorial, he said, in anger: "Does he think to know everything, and because he is a great poet would he be a Minister?" The culprit, warned not to show himself for some time, wrote in supplication to Madame de Maintenon, watched his chance, and had word with her, furtively, in one of the alleys of the Park. She said to him: "It is my fault that this trouble has come upon you. Let the clouds pass. I will see to it that the sun shines again." Racine made answer in sadness and resignation, and with that sort of sorrowful insight that men have whose part in life is played and draws to its close. The sound of wheels was heard. "It is the King," said Madame de Maintenon hurriedly, "conceal yourself!" The poor courtier made his escape into the thicket. His heart, so quick to suffer and be touched, had been wounded for the last time.

In the autumn of the year 1698, Racine felt pain in his right side. A tumour appeared against the ribs. One morning, reading in his study, he had great pain in his head; he came downstairs and said to his children: "I think I have a touch of fever, but it is nothing serious. I will go to bed for a while." He got up no more. His illness was long. A man whose delicate organization was upset by the lightest discomfort, he now bore acute suffering with gentle patience. Subject as he had been to that fear of dying which haunts all endowed with imagination, he faced death without fear when it came upon him. His was an example of what the priests call a state of grace. He had the faith. It is at the moment of death that Christianity

triumphs. Since the Christian performs his every act in view of that last, for that last act he has great resources in store.

Racine, in view of his approaching end, was careful to assure some money to his family, and expressed the wish that Boileau's pension should be claimed along with his own. To this friend he said as he took him in his embrace, "I think I am happy in dying before you." He begged Rollin to watch over the education of his son Louis. The doctor, who had not been quick to recognize the nature of his malady, decided to open the abscess. When the dying man was told by his eldest son that he could yet be saved by operation, "God is master of all things," said Racine, "but I tell you plainly that were I given my choice of life or death, I could hardly choose; death finds my accounts even." The operation was unsuccessful; whether attempted too late, or that the nature of the case made it useless. A priest from Saint-André-des-Arcs gave Racine the last sacraments; the holy oils touched his eyes and lips, his hands and feet, who had so loved and felt what was fair and sweet in life, who had known the pride of the poet, and the failings inherent in a nature of such delicacy. He breathed his last in his dwelling in the Rue des Marais, on April 21st, 1699, between three and four o'clock in the morning. He was aged fifty-nine years and four months.

Racine had asked to be buried in the cemetery of Port-Royal-des-Champs, at the foot of Hamon's tomb. The coffin was placed above that of M. Hamon; there was no room below. After the visitation of the tombs of Port-Royal in 1709, the remains of Jean Racine, dragged from their chosen

earth, were transferred to the Church of Saint-Étienne-du-Mont, where they still rest, between those of M. de Sacy and M. Antoine Lemaistre.

In this parish is also kept the broken stone which bears the epitaph of Jean Racine, surmounted by his chevalier's crest, and shield bearing his heraldic swan.

Jean Racine lived at the moment when the French genius was at its full, when the language had taken final shape, but was yet in its youth, at its golden age. The old poets were his study and his delight, and he bound himself as with cords in that Greek and Latin tradition, all of reason and of beauty which made and gave us the forms of poetry, the ode, epopee, tragedy, and comedy. The poet's tenderness, his joy in the senses, his ardours, his desire for knowledge, his very weaknesses brought him acquainted with the passions that furnish matter for tragedy, and gave it him to express pity and terror.

And so his period, his education, and his nature, conspired together to make of him the most perfect of French poets, and the greatest by reason of the sustained nobility of his work.

ALAIN-RENÉ LE SAGE



E worked to live. And there you have the life of Le Sage in four words, after the manner of that Doctor Zeb, who compressed the history of the world into a single line.

Alain-René Le Sage was born at Sarzeau, in the Isle of Rhuys, May 8th, 1668, being the child of Master Claude, who had a seat on the bench there, and of Demoiselle Jeanne Brenugat, lawful wife of the said Master Claude. As soon as Alain was of an age to learn, he was placed in the College of Vannes under its rector, Brochart, an ex-Jesuit and a good schoolmaster. He was not yet ten when, in 1677, holding his father's hand, he followed good Jeanne Brenugat, who had died on September 11th, to the chapel of Kerlen, in the parish church of Sarzeau, where she was laid to rest. Then, in his black clothes, the child returned to Vannes, and after five years spent on the Institutes of Quintilian and Plutarch's Lives, he must once more tread the road to the chapel of Kerlen, whither Master Claude was setting forth to join his wife.

The deceased man left some property to his only son; but the management of it was entrusted to Gabriel Le Sage, brother to the late Claude, and he ruined his ward.

In 1690 the orphan arrived in Paris, for his classes in law and philosophy at the University. We lose sight of him in the great city. We may take it that the study of the *Practicien français* and the rules of Logic did not occupy all his time. He had a taking appearance, an active body, and a quick intelligence. They say that a certain lady of quality was not blind to these recommendations. Wild oats may have been sown, but nothing is really known of any follies of his student days. Had he told of them they would figure in all the memoirs, and some pretty sinners, lightly sketched, but drawn for immortality, would peep out at us from some old book with vermilion edges. But men who, like Le Sage, forget what happens to them from one day to another, write no confessions. Humiliating oneself in public argues much pride, and, moreover, he early turned his back on adventures that may be met in public gardens. Love more serious engaged him, and held him true throughout his life.

While he was living in that same Rue du Vieux-Colombier, where La Fontaine, Chapelle, and Racine used to meet at Boileau's, young Alain-René paid frequent visits to a certain burgess who had a daughter both virtuous and comely. Her name was Marie; he loved her, and she loved him. The rest of the tale is simple. The parish registers shall tell the story.

On August 17th, 1694, Le Sage obtained special licence from the Archbishop of Paris to marry, without publication of banns, Marie-Elisabeth Huyard, daughter of André Huyard, burgess of Paris, and of Marie Carlos, both of the parish of Saint-Barthélemi.

By virtue of a further licence, granted 27th September of the same year, the marriage was celebrated the next day in the Church of Saint-Sulpice, which was now the parish of the Huyards, as well as that of Le Sage.

Marie was twenty-two, Alain-René twenty-seven. He was at the Parliamentary Bar, but he had no briefs, and thanks to Uncle Gabriel, not a penny to his name. For dowry, Marie brought him her youth, her beauty and her virtue. The two poor young people were so obscure in their lot, so lost to view in the King's wide realm among all the sober-hued, bourgeois crowd, that it is impossible to discover any trace of them to-day. Danchet, friend Danchet, Alain-René's comrade at the University, a good humanist, and a warm-hearted youth, saw much of the young folk; but he was as needy as they, and took vows at Chartres.

Alain-René is thought to have gone with his wife to the neighbourhood of Vitré, and to have been secretary there to a Farmer-General of Taxes, or of the Salt duties. What we do know is that he was back in Paris in 1698, and living near that same church of Saint-Sulpice where he had been married, and where, on April 24th, his son, Jules-François, was christened. He found a good friend in M. de Lyonne, abbé of Marmoutier and Châlis, and prior of Saint-Martin-des-Champs, who gave him some help in kind, or at least some encouragement, and made him transfer his abode across the river that he might be nearer to himself; and it was at Saint-Eustache that Le Sage had his third son, François-Antoine, baptized on February 23rd, 1700. Two years later there was a daughter. In short, he had a wife and four children to support, and all his

fortunes were still in his head, but it was a good headpiece, and a well-furnished.

The first year of his marriage already saw him trimming his pen, and turning to his inkpot in the hopes of winning a little credit, or, better still, a little profit. Nothing better suggesting itself to him than a translation of the letters of Aristenætus, he made a slender volume thereof which his friend Danchet had printed for him at Chartres. It fell unheeded from the Press, a poor copy of a poor original. Some other vein had to be worked, some other seam discovered. It appears that it was the Abbé de Lyonne who showed his friend where to sink his shaft. He advised him to learn Spanish, and thus equip himself for importing into France the literature of Spain. The prior of Saint-Martin-des-Champs no doubt had in view the high-flown cloak-and-rapier performances of Calderon's rivals and successors. Le Sage was not happy in his early attempts. He translated three or four tragedies and a novel, without any success. Then, in the year 1707, the spell was broken. In that year he furnished the players with a couple of comedies; one, the more important, *Don César Ursin*, and one, a slighter affair, *Crispin rival de son maître*. The first, which was a translation, had success at Court, and the other, his own production, found favour in town. In the same year he published, with Barbin, the *Diable boiteux* (or the Devil on Two Sticks), a romance, the groundwork of which was taken from the Spanish, but whose style, the only thing that really counts, was French.

Every one who could read at all was anxious to read the *Diable boiteux*. Its readers found human nature painted in a novel and arresting

manner, and recognized a genius that, laying hold of the vital side of things, set the whole world agog. Even Boileau's little foot-boy, in his master's house at Auteuil, fell to devouring the tale in secret. Boileau threatened to put him out of doors if he did not immediately return the book whence it came. Goodman Boileau could not sleep under the same roof with *le Diable boiteux*, not a single night. It augurs well for a new book, if elderly critics fall foul of it. Depend upon it, if they approve, there is nothing new in it, and be sure that if, on the contrary, it excites their wrath, it has originality and is worth perusal. The second edition of this book, published before the year was out, sold out more quickly than the first. Two young nobles wrangled for possession of the last copy, and drew their swords on each other upon the steps of the Sainte-Chapelle. There was bread for the family, but when the bread was eaten brains had to be cudgelled again. Le Sage offered *Turcaret* to the players. As it was a masterpiece, these gentry wanted to cut it about, and turned up their noses at it. They disgusted Le Sage, and sickened him of the theatre. *Turcaret* was a stinging attack on the manners of the day. It pilloried the financiers. The successors of the Montaurons and the La Sablières took the wall when they walked abroad. They robbed at will, they bought everything, they possessed everything. Their money was all-powerful.

Turcaret was read in the salons. Madame de Bouillon, a would-be intellectual, expressed a wish to hear it. Le Sage, kept detained at the Law Courts till long after dinner time by a case he eventually lost, arrived very late. The duchess

was frigid and her greeting was harsh. "Madame," said our good Le Sage, "I have wasted two hours of your time—it is only fair I should enable you to regain them. I will not read you my comedy." He pocketed his manuscript and left, in spite of all remonstrances.

The year 1715 witnessed the death of Louis XIV and the appearance of *Gil Blas*. This comedy, in a hundred acts diverse, as was said of La Fontaine's, has Spain for its setting; courtesans mantilla-clad, magnificent and penniless grandees, beggars armed with blunderbusses, all play their parts to admiration. But its subject is man, who is, at bottom, in Spain what he is in France. Here as there, the luxury of the few cloaks the misery of the many, and scamps abound. When we take up *Gil Blas*, what worlds we are away from *Francion*, the *Roman comique*, or the *Roman bourgeois!*

Seemliness, the polish of good manners, social tone, prevail throughout this masterpiece of Le Sage's; one could even wish that the style were less sustained, that there were less restraint in the movement, and that, I do not say the burlesque spirit, but the picaresque, were occasionally in evidence.

Le Sage was deaf when he gave us this admirable book, wherein every lightest murmur of self-love and passion is accurately noted. And it is the work of a man who worked that he might live. Uncle Gabriel, who ruined his nephew, is obviously the Uncle in *Turcaret* and *Gil Blas*.

Le Sage is now forty-seven; he has put forth two or three masterpieces; he has done miracles in romance. Yet must that headpiece of his, from which he has brought forth a whole world of living

men and women, still go on providing him with the means to feed his wife and children. He works and goes on working for the booths. The inane vanity of actors does not harass him there. They're the people to swallow plays; he's the man to write them. Coarse flavoured satire for Harlequin, Scaramouch, Columbine, and Pierrot to spout on their trestled stage to footmen and serving wenches, betwixt the fan-seller's stall and the quack doctor's waggon—such is the work to which he must address himself. Helped by a handful of boon companions, he must have turned out twenty, thirty, forty, sixty, seventy, harlequinades. They go off like hot cakes. We know the sort of thing to talk about, if we want the crowd to laugh. Certain matters never fail to amuse the groundlings. At times, in verses written to be spoken at the fair, the rhyme, purposely inexact, suggested the missing word, that is to say, the indecent word. One day an actress let slip the word itself, and spent a day or two in the Salpetrière in consequence. The Regent, who was of a lively humour and devoid of prejudice, wanted to hear these jests at his ease, and commanded the players from their booth to the Palais-Royal.

When all is said, there is no saying why we laugh at cuckolds, and at all the little pothers of conjugal existence, but there is still less reason why we should not laugh. We must needs conclude that a sense of the ridiculous is deep seated in the composition of the human animal. It is, indeed, that quality which most markedly differentiates him from the beasts.

Voltaire set down that *Gil Blas* was translated from the Spanish. No doubt he really thought so, for we can hardly believe he made such a statement

merely to revenge himself for a knavish quip of Harlequin; who picking up a book from the boards exclaims: "Je prends mon *vol terre à terre*"* (Voltaire à terre). But Voltaire may have been mistaken; at all events the Spanish original has never been brought to light.

To make an honest living Scaramouch, Cassandra, and their patter do not suffice. Le Sage, growing old, busies himself with translations, imitations, and adaptations. He puts out *Roland Amoureux* between 1717 and 1721, *Guzman d'Alfarache* and the *Aventures de M. Robert, dit Beauchesne*, in 1732. Then his public begins to see that he is growing tired. An observer notes in his journal in January, 1833: "Le Sage, the author of *Gil Blas*, has just given us the life of M. de Beauchesne, a filibustering captain. The book, of course, could not be badly written, since it is by Le Sage, but it is easy to see, considering the stuff the writer deals in of late, that he is only writing for a living, and that, in consequence, he is no longer in a position to give time and study to his works. It is now six or seven years since La Ribou advanced him a hundred pistoles on his fourth volume of *Gil Blas* which is still not finished, and won't be just yet."

No, he was no longer in a position to give time and study to his work. He published the *History of Estevanille Gonzalès* in 1734; in the following year, *Une journée des Parques;* in 1736 the *Bachelier de Salamanque*. He was emptying his pack, and the poor great old man was coming to the end of his stock-in-trade. In 1740, in the *Valise trouvée*, he again took up the *Letters of Aristœnetus*, which he had translated when he was young and without

* "I spring from earth and back again."

experience. And he was reduced at last, in 1742, to editing a collection of *bons mots* (*Mélange amusant de saillies d'esprit*). For all that, he had the well-merited reputation of a great writer, and all who knew him loved him, for he was as kind as he was clever. His conversation gave such pleasure that, when he was installed at his usual café in the *Rue Saint-Jacques*, those present would make a circle round him, and many, the better to hear him, would stand on the chairs and tables. Still he was poor. He had been unable to give his daughter a portion, and she remained unmarried and died in an almshouse. His second son was a canon. Two others were actors; but he saw nothing of them now. The youngest, Pitténec, was an actor in a strolling company. The eldest, Montménil, gained applause at the Comédie-Française for his excellent representations of menservants and yokels. A man of worth in talents and disposition, he sought reconciliation with his father, but shortly afterwards died suddenly when with a hunting party at La Villette, in September, 1743, at the age of forty-eight. It was a severe blow to his father. Le Sage, "too old to work, too proud to beg, too honest to borrow," says Voisenon, who knew him well, retired with his wife to Boulogne-sur-Mer, where he lived with his son, the canon. A letter, written some forty years after, by the Chevalier de Tressan to an unknown correspondent, affords us a glimpse of the good old man at the end of his days:

"PARIS, *20th January*, 1780.

"You have asked me to let you know somewhat of the last days of the celebrated author of *Gil Blas* and many other esteemed works. Here, Monsieur,

is all I can furnish. After the battle of Fontenoy, in 1745, the late King having failed to appoint anyone to serve under Marshal de Richelieu, I was detained by circumstances and fresh instructions at Boulogne-sur-Mer, where I remained as Commandant in Boulonnois, Ponthieu, and Picardy.

"As I knew that M. Le Sage, then some eighty years of age, and his wife, whose age was about the same, were dwelling in Boulogne, my earliest care was to visit them and assure myself personally of their condition. I found them in the house of their son, a canon of the Cathedral of Boulogne, and never did filial piety devote itself with greater love in cherishing and making bright the last days of a father and mother, who had scarcely any resources beyond the modest income of the son I speak of.

"M. l'Abbé Le Sage was held in high consideration at Boulogne. His intelligence, his good traits, his devoted offices to his relations, endeared him to his worthy bishop, Monseigneur de Pressy, and to his colleagues and his acquaintance.

"I have seldom seen a stronger likeness than that which the Abbé Le Sage bore to his brother, M. Montménil; he had even something of his talents and his more lovable gifts; he had the art, which is so rare, of the varied tone and short pause which, without being declamatory, impress on an audience the characteristic feeling and charm of a work.

"I had known the Sieur Montménil and I regretted his loss; I felt liking and esteem for his brother; and the late Queen, when I had the honour of making known to her his condition and his straitened circumstances, accorded him an annuity.

"I was warned not to visit M. Le Sage till towards midday; and I had occasion to observe for the second time, in the person of this aged man, what the effect of atmospheric conditions can be from moment to moment on our organs, in the mournful days of our decline.

"M. Le Sage, waking of a morning as soon as the sun had climbed some degrees above the horizon, showed animation, and gathered feeling and strength in measure as the luminary approached the meridian; but as it began to incline towards its setting, the old man's sensibilities, clearness of mind and activity of senses receded in proportion; and no sooner had the sun plunged some degrees below the horizon than M. Le Sage would fall into a sort of lethargy from which no one so much as attempted to rouse him.

"I was careful to go and see him only at the time of day when his understanding was most lucid, and that was at the after-dinner hour; I could not look without emotion on this worthy old man who preserved the gaiety and urbanity of his best years, and even showed at times the imaginative power of the creator of the *Diable boiteux* and *Turcaret:* but one day, arriving later than usual, I marked with sorrow that his talk began to take on a likeness to the last homily of the Archbishop of Grenada, and I withdrew.

"M. Le Sage had grown very deaf; I always found him seated at a table whereon lay a large cone-shaped trumpet; at times taken in his hand with vivacity, it would lie inert on the table whenever the visit in progress gave him no expectation of agreeable converse; as Commandant in the district, I had the pleasure of seeing it always in

use when I was there; and this was an apprenticeship for me in sustaining later on the ear trumpet's unfortunate activity in the case of my dear and illustrious friend and colleague M. de la Condamine.

"M. Le Sage died in the winter of 1746–47. I made it a point of honour and of duty to be present at his obsequies, along with the principal officers of my command. His widow did not long survive him. The Abbé Le Sage was bemourned some years later by his Chapter and the enlightened society whose admiration his virtues had excited.

"I have the honour to be, etc.,

"LE COMTE DE TRESSAN.

"Lieut.-General of the King's Armies; member of the Académie française and of the Académie des Sciences."

Le Sage died on November 17th, 1747, after a life of labour as innocent as was his soul, as beautiful and simple as his genius, and as hard as that necessity which he fought without respite but could never overcome.

THE ADVENTURES OF THE ABBÉ PRÉVOST



HE little town of Hesdin, in the valley of the Canche, had, as late as 1639, cruel experiences of war; and prudence enforced a belt of moats and ramparts. Hesdin had not long been united to France by the treaty of the Pyrenees. Her townsmen, laborious like all the people of the north, manufactured soap, tanned leather, and made caps, and on feast days walked abroad with their families in the green ways through the fields of corn and colza. Such as had gardens planted them with trees, and did well.

Lievin Prévost was King's Attorney in the bailiwick. He kept order within the limits of his jurisdiction, played his part in church disputes and the affairs of minors, and was an adept in the quibbles of the law.

Having married Demoiselle Marie Duclaie, he had by her five sons, whom he brought up as well as he could, occupied as he was all day on the King's business.

Antoine François, the second of the five brothers, who came into this world, where he was to have so many adventures, on April 1st, 1697, must at his birth have given occasion for some clumsy pleasantries among the good folk in the bailiwick. All Fools' Day was duly observed in those days;

Le Trévoux tells us so. He grew up, and, when he was old enough, was sent to the school in Hesdin, then managed by the Jesuits. He proved himself an apt scholar, and made good use of the *Novus apparatus* and other text-books of Père Jouvency, then new to the world. The little fathers, seeing that he was intelligent, were anxious to get hold of him. They taught him the lives of the Saints of the Order and the history of the Missions, and filled his head with tales of miracles and torments. As is their way, they were insinuating and persuasive; they cajoled and threatened as served their turn, and made the child their own. The Attorney, who was determined that his son should be as well taught as anybody, sent him to Paris to recommence his classes in rhetoric at the Collège d'Harcourt.* The most promising pupils in the kingdom were sent there to learn the secrets of Latin eloquence, and it was no fault of the directors if their students failed to become so many little Quintilians. To this Antoine made some measure of approach.

He was fifteen when he left Paris, innocent as he came, and with the consent of his father went to La Flèche† for his novitiate. He was fired with the love of Jesus. One meets with these ardent natures; they are always on fire, but their fire is not always fed with the same fuel. At the end of six months our young neophyte departed without leave, and stood once more in the presence of his astonished parent.

Hesdin, being a small town, probably failed to

* Founded by Raoul d'Harcourt, a Canon of Paris, in the thirteenth century.

† Founded by Henry IV. Managed by the Jesuits from 1604.

give him all he expected from life and woman's society. His father, the King's Attorney, rated him severely, and it was said that there were some very sharp encounters between them.

In fine, at the age of sixteen, he conceived a disgust for this world, and knocked once more at the portals of the Jesuits. At La Flèche they did not care to receive him; they despaired of keeping him, or more probably, knowing his obstinacy, they wished to confirm him in his vocation by putting difficulties in his way. His obstinacy promptly showed itself, he resolved to get his admission at the hands of the general of the Order, and he left for Rome with good courage, alone, and young, indeed, for such a journey. He was no sooner out of France than he fell ill. His purse was empty, the innkeepers, honest gentlemen, had soon seen to that. He was under obligations to an officer for his entry into a hospital, where he soon picked up his strength and spirits with the help of a cup or two of broth. The officer, seeing him on his feet again, thought it a pity that so fine a lad should not serve the King. We know how the recruiting sergeants of those days gathered men for the Army. They made them drink the King's health, clapped the regimental hat on their heads, and gave them to know that they were soldiers and would not fail to grow into sergeants and captains one day, if they lived long enough. They gave the new recruit his piece of silver on enlistment, and invited him to put it to good use by wetting the colours along with them. The officer who had helped Prévost into the hospital used even less ceremony; he declared that he had only given the boy money because he had enlisted in the service.

Prévost, willy-nilly, was a soldier. He must march; he must don the white uniform; he must do his hair over his ear, and enclose the ends in a black bag behind. He did his musket-drill, ate his soup out of his mess-tin, slept in a camp-bed, did barrack offices. They proposed to send him to the front, for fighting was still going on. He was furious, and he deserted.

Peace being made, the King dead, and the Duke of Orleans Regent, the young deserter was amnestied; he came out of hiding and went back to his convent. He was received with open arms. No reproaches, only smiles and caresses, and a soft tear or so.* The good fathers knew well enough that secular flies are not to be taken with penitential vinegar. The prodigal son, moved by such excess of kindness, shed tears over the fatted calf killed for him by his spiritual fathers. In the first burst of his zeal he composed a Latin ode in honour of St. Francis Xavier, the apostle of the Indies. Without doubt he would have composed odes for

* Here I refer me, not without distrust, to a chronicler of gossip: the author of the *Journal de la Cour de Paris* (*Revue Rétrospective*, 1836). I have taken no notice of what M. Ambroise Firmin-Didot relates, on the word of his great grandfather, François Didot, concerning a struggle on the stairs between the procurator and his son. One does not well know at what period to place this scene; moreover, François Didot only knew the Abbé when the latter was already an old man. (See *Encyclopédie du XIX siècle*—article Typographie.) I have freely availed myself, throughout this notice, of the anonymous essay which serves as introduction to the *Œuvres Choisies de l'Abbé Prévost* (Amsterdam and Paris, 1703). This essay is attributed by Oettinger to Pierre-Bernard d'Héry, born in 1756 at Auxerre. I am indebted for this piece of information to the conscientious labours of M. Henry Harisse. (*Bibliographie de Manon Lescaut, Paris*, D. Morgant et C. Fatout 1877.)

all the Saints in the Jesuit calendar, and not only would he have celebrated them, but he would have imitated their virtues, would have lived the life of an apostle, and died at Siam, or Canton, or somewhere even more remote, in the odour of sanctity, had there been no such thing as a woman in the kingdom of France. But this strapping lad, of lively humour and sanguine aspect, was also amorous. Hypocrisy did not sit well on him; it was not in him to devote himself to the Deity and the damsels at the same time, so he jumped the convent walls and sped the short hours joyously with every Manon he met. He pleased them as much as they pleased him, for he had a handsome face, most expressive black eyes, and a temperament that gave him no rest.

Back in the world once again, he came to the conclusion, and not without grounds, that a coat with blue facings certainly became him better than a cassock, and he rejoined his regiment. This time his service, according to his subsequent account, was more to his taste and advantage, which means that he held a commission; his birth permitted it. He came under fire, made war and made love; he feasted his fill. But the musketeers were not altogether a fellowship of gentlemen. Not a few with whom he played cards in the wineshops, were rascals who would empty his purse in a couple of deals, and make off, leaving him sorely embarrassed to pay the piper. And he found himself at times in very awkward situations. The King's Attorney, who was a man of a very unaccommodating humour, flew into a towering rage at this latest escapade of his young hopeful. The latter did not think that a meeting with him would be altogether desirable

at the moment, and slipped over into Holland. There he fell in with a young girl prettier than any he had ever met before. Then and there he loved her with all imaginable ardour. She deceived him. He thought himself the unhappiest man on earth, and, since he thought so, so he was. He deemed that he could never be comforted, but there he was wrong. In his despair he renounced his mistress, the ladies of Holland, women in general, and all the pleasures of the world, and hastened to immure himself in a Benedictine monastery at Saint-Maur. He was twenty-two years of age. He had been twice a soldier, and twice a Jesuit.

The Benedictines, who were at enmity with the Jesuits, welcomed him as a trophy snatched from the foe. There was joyous outcry at his advent. They had lifted a sheep from the fold of Saint Ignatius. Prevost's words were, "I am a dead man. Here is my tomb." Greater candour were impossible. He served one year as a novice, and no one had word of him all that time. The Attorney thought he had gone to the devil, whither he had consigned him, what time his son, prostrate in a cell, was wearing away his lips on a crucifix.

When the twelvemonth was by, Antoine Prévost, with the requisite solemnity and according to common form, took the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. He lay under the pall, and the office of the dead was recited over him. The congregation of Saint-Maur, whose director-general had his residence at the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, at Paris, had long been engaged on an immense work of scholastic research. Every house of the Order was furnished with a library

all the monks were at work writing, while the lay-brothers prepared the vegetables and cleaned the rooms. The more learned monks were excused from regular attendance at the sacred offices so that they might not lose in praying time that could be more profitably employed in the search for knowledge. But the Jesuits made trouble in this city of books by obtaining, by fair means or foul, *lettres de cachet* against the more illustrious of the Benedictines.

The youthful Prévost entered the congregation just at the moment when the spark of quarrel began to glow; his advent fanned it into flame. For in the eyes of the little Fathers, was he not a felon, a turncoat, an apostate, in the act of passing, by diabolic influence, from the bosom, nay from the very heart of Jesus, into the very workshop of lies, the breeding place of heresies? For the Jesuits accused their rivals of Jansenism, and it was the best means of sending them to rot in the Bastille, or, at least, to drag out a miserable existence at Cologne or at The Hague. Perhaps, after all, there was some foundation for the charge. Heresy is an insidious thing, and the doctors of the Church themselves are not always safe from its snares. *Tradidit mundum disputationibus eorum.** It is no business of ours.

Dom Prévost, clothed with the black scapular of the Children of St. Benedict, was sent by his general to the Abbey of Saint-Ouen, at Rouen. There was then in that city a Jesuit father named Brun, like the bear in the tale, and just as ill-nurtured. This Brun smelt out the young Benedictine and began growling at him. Prévost replied freely and frankly to the disingenuous

* "The world is given over to their disputes."

libels of his adversary. It was not the way to make an end of them. Brun forced the note. The other, who was somewhat hot-headed, as we have seen, grew angry, dashed off a rejoinder in the form of a pamphlet, and took it to the printer.

But he had no sooner done so than he regretted his violence, and asked the bookseller to return the manuscript. He was very unwilling to comply, for such pamphlets always sell well when the abuse is strong; and every one likes a scandal. Dom Prévost threw his pamphlet into the fire, and so the blustering Jesuit, since he had had to do with a decent man, got the last word and was able to brag that he had reduced his opponent to silence. From Saint-Ouen Dom Prévost repaired to Amiens to be ordained priest. He drew near to the altar vested in amice, stole, and manciple, the chasuble folded on his left arm, a taper in his right hand. And he hears the voice of the bishop saying, "Receive the yoke of the Lord, for His yoke is sweet and his burden light."

"I am in sweet bondage to a golden tress, and a delicate embrace," cries a Latin elegiac poet. What matter the bond! But love it we must, love it we must, and always.

Dom Prévost was sent on to Bec, near Bernay, to deliver a course of theological lectures from the chair of Anselm and Lanfranc. In the old days of Anselm philosophy was the handmaid of theology: *philosophia ancilla theologiæ*. This order of precedence was growing obsolete at the time of Dom Prévost's advent. For all his piety, the new doctor was not strong enough to resist the trend of the times. And it mattered little what he taught to a few shavelings in a dilapidated abbey.

From Bec, he repaired to the College of Saint-Germer, where he taught the humanities. No doubt but his teaching showed that urbanity and natural restraint which marked his later writing. The people at Évreux, being in need of a preacher, applied to the Benedictines, who gave them Dom Prévost. He preached the Lenten sermons in the Cathedral church. He spoke of the joys of this world, and of the weaknesses of the flesh as a man may who has experienced them, and the ladies of Évreux found pleasure in listening to a monk so good to look at and so eloquent on the subject of sin. Thus it came about that for the space of forty days Dom Prévost beheld from his lofty pulpit many eyes, dark or blue, wistful and wet with tears, gazing on him from under powdered tresses, engarlanded with lace and ribbon; and the spectacle was well calculated to threaten such a monk as he with the dreams that visit even the most pious and the most solitary. And he had his share of such dreams in his cell. Voluptuous and terrible visions came to haunt him, and a time came when he could not refrain from dwelling on them in his romances. Young and robust, bringing to his monkish pillow the still warm memories of those nights in Holland, how should he fail to see the whole procession of St. Anthony's temptations passing across his couch?

Impure visions have always been the fear of the good monk, everywhere and at every period. He seeks to conquer them with prayer, he tries to avert them by fast, hair shirt, and scourge. But all in vain. His terror wakes, his heart grows troubled, at the approach of night. The hymns of his breviary give expression to his sufferings in this

kind. At the hour of vespers, when the sun goes down, the monks in choir supplicate heaven, whose light is abandoning them, to spare them the temptations of the dark.

"Repelle a servis tuis
Quidquid per immunditiam
Aut moribus se suggerit
Aut actibus se interserit."

Are these prayers heard? No. The monks rise on the morrow full of shame and disgust; they hasten to shake off their sinful slumber. "May my purity be restored." That is the first cry at the matin hour:

"Ne corpus adsit sordidum."

Only the dawn can put to flight the squadrons of hell, *caterva damonum*.

Bathed in the first freshness of the day, in the morning light, the monks sing the hymn of lauds:

"Aurora jam spargit polum,
Terris dies illabitur,
Lucis resultat spiculum:
Discedat omne lubricum,
Phantasma noctis discedat."

They shake off the phantoms of the dark, but with the darkness those phantoms return. Prévost was a Christian, and though his *Cleveland* may have passed for an apology for natural religion, and though he may have been accused of embracing Protestantism in Holland, I do not believe that he ever had, in reality, an hour's doubt in his life. Believe, indeed! His faith was of the fullest, and all the firmer for the lack of any ponderings that might have shaken it. With all his imagination,

he was the most unthinking, the most unphilosophical, of men. He believed in the sacraments, in mysteries, in miracles, in hell; he believed whatever he was told; he was persuaded that Heaven sent him warnings in dreams; he did not doubt the virtue of a secret remedy which consisted, among other practices, of reciting the second versicle of the hymn *Vexilla Regis* while thrice making the Sign of the Cross at the three words *mucrone diro lanceæ;* he thought a certain powder could so affect the eyes as to make one behold a bear where there was in reality only a man; he was certain that runaway horses could be stopped by ashes of wolf's liver, and, in a word, he delighted in ghost stories, and none were too far-fetched to please him.

His Lenten course preached, he went on to the Blancs-Manteaux* in Paris, where he held forth again and, it is said, with great effect. Thence he entered the Abbey of St-Germain-des-Prés, which was the headquarters of the Order, and there the most learned of the monks were gathered. They made use of him to revise the *Gallia Christiana*, a vast compilation of ecclesiastical history begun in 1715 and now in its fourth volume. He set to work with the ardour he put into everything he undertook, searched records, compiled, revised, wore away his quill to the feathers, drained his inkpot, and added almost a whole volume to the collection, one of those great crowded folios such as are not turned out every year, even by Benedictines. We are not told that this volume is

* The Blancs-Manteaux were monks formerly called Guillemins, who established themselves in Paris. Their house was subsequently taken over by the Benedictines.

better or worse than the others. The *Gallia Christiana* is a very learned work.

Prévost sought recreation from writing Latin by writing French. He wrote a novel in his cell, or rather twenty novels, for the *Memoirs of a Man of Quality* contain adventures enough for twenty, full measure, with a beginning and an end to each. The indefatigable Prévost did not as yet realize that every book must have an end. He liberally besprinkled his work with the loftiest eulogies of morality and religion, but he abounded in profane descriptions, and at times gave utterance to fierce outbursts of passion. Love of the world was flooding in upon him again. Plainly the old Adam was not to be killed by being buried in the dust of a monastic library.

"Vaines précautions! cruelle destinée!"

as Racine says, Prevost's favourite poet. Despair had made a monk of him; but despair had gone and left him with the cowl. In this state of mind he wrote one of his brothers a letter wherein he said:

"I know my heart's weakness, and am sensible how important it is for its peace that I should not devote myself to barren studies, which will leave it to languish and wither; if I am to be happy in the religious life, I must preserve in full force the persuasive influence of that grace that led me thither. How difficult it is to pick up a little strength when one has made a habit of one's weakness, and how much it costs us to fight for victory when for long past one has found it sweet to yield!"

Is not that the voice of a sincere Christian but,

withal, one from whom grace was departing? Theologians say truly that grace is capricious and does these things; she leaves her man in the lurch. And then we must bear in mind ('tis Pascal that says so), that there is more than one kind of grace. There is notably grace sufficing, which does not suffice. And doubtless that was all that poor Prévost had left him.

As he had a talent for imagining strange stories of adventure and for relating them with effect, he used often of a winter night to tell the monks tales for their diversion. And one day broke and found the good Fathers still listening to him.

Prévost was beginning to give rein to his imagination. Prévost was becoming a bad monk. Some old prior, grown grey in the habit, saw it well enough, and scolded, and imposed penance, but only finished by further disgusting him whom he would fain have restored to the fold. Harassed as he was by his spiritual Fathers, the conduct of his brothers in religion brought him no consolation, for they were forever making him the object of their pettifogging intrigues and jealousies and eavesdroppings. He began to hate them, he felt that they were not his kind. The fact is he was too open for them. As may be guessed it was a long time before he became aware of the ill-will with which he was regarded; but when he did wake to the fact, the convent became utterly intolerable to him. He confessed the state of his feelings to certain friends, and asked what he should do. His vows were binding; there was no question of being released from them. The only remedy his friends could light on was to obtain leave for Dom Prévost to be transferred to Cluny, where

the rule was less strict than at Saint-Maur. Rome was approached, and Rome is sometimes accommodating. A secret brief for his translation was sent to the Bishop of Amiens for him to promulgate, and promulgated it would have been, had the Bishop been a little prompter. A penitentiary father of austere pattern, and a Gallican of the old school, entered one day into the episcopal study, saw by chance the brief on the table, read it, asked whom it referred to, and, on Monsignor's reply, knit his brows:

"Rome," he said, "is prodigal of forgiveness: the world will be full of monks out of love with their state if one listens to them. Dom Prévost is notorious for his undisciplined and frivolous proclivities. If he has any better reasons to allege, let them be heard, but nothing should be done ere that." The bishop's penitentiary taking this high tone, Monsignor, who avoided quarrels, put the brief in a drawer, where perhaps it may be to this day.

Meanwhile the impatient Prévost was saying to himself: "Even if the brief is not promulgated yet, it soon will be. Monsignor of Amiens is a friend of mine. Let's be packing." He reasoned no further, but wrote three letters explaining his departure, one to the Father-General, one to the prior, and a third to one of the monks. He left them in his cell, made across the kitchen-garden right over the beds, jumped over the wall, joined some friends who were waiting for him in the Luxembourg gardens, doffed scapular and habit, dressed himself in ordinary clothes that were there ready for him, took a deep breath, and went off to enjoy himself in a tavern with the accomplices

of his escape. He only left it next morning to go and see the Bishop of Amiens, who was then in Paris. Monsignor, who received him with great embarrassment, gently acquainted him with the trouble about the brief. He owed it to his episcopal standing to admonish an erring monk. He brought to the task all the benignity of his disposition. "There is a deal of talk about your want of balance, my son," he said. "You will do well to return to St. Germain-des-Prés; keep a closer watch over yourself and you will silence these ill reports." Prévost was amazed. No brief to justify his leaving. His case was serious; he was liable to arrest and punishment. But in the humour he was in, a journey was a small matter. He packed his bundle and fled to Holland. He was already acquainted with that land of refuge. There he lived as he could. At first he got a post as waiter in a café. Then he hired a booth and embarked on comedy. He was, at once, manager, author, and actor. A man of resource if you like! All he had in the world was the bulky manuscript he had written o' nights at St. Germain-des-Prés. He put in a few finishing touches and, lo, there resulted the *Memoirs of a Man of Quality*, printed in Paris and read by every one! Mademoiselle Aissé who, like every one else, devoured those six volumes of romance, cried over them from start to finish, and then, when she got to the end, said that it was not a good book. The little wildfire delighted in the extraordinary, and she found it in these tales; but Madame du Deffand and Madame de Lencin had given her lessons in taste, and the poor child was afraid to admire the things she loved. The public followed her lead; read the book, but refused, not without

reason, to reckon the author among the good writers.

While the *Memoirs of a Man of Quality*, more widely read than approved, and damned by monks of every pattern, were making their way in the world, their headstrong author had taken up his abode at The Hague, was sauntering along its brick pavements, under the sound of its carillons, and wandering along the quays beside the canals, his eye alert, his nose to the salt sea winds. Chance brought him acquainted with a pretty girl who had birth, good sense, and a lively wit to recommend her. He fell in love; indeed, he would have done so for less. The young lady was poor, and, though she made an effort to keep her distress from the notice of a stranger, he made out that she had just lost a part of the exiguous means on which she depended. It is a pleasure to do good to those we love. He offered help as one who feared to be refused, and with such frankness and nice feeling that the young Dutchwoman was not offended. She would not, by a refusal, hurt the feelings of a generous man, poor as herself; but how can one help loving a benefactor, when he happens to be lovable? And such Prévost was. She did not hide her regard for him. "Marry me," she said to him one fine day, with complete candour. Being of the reformed religion the matter seemed to her plain sailing enough. Some lowly minister in a village chapel would unite them, for better or for worse, and without asking questions. But Prévost pondered it, and told himself that to marry a Protestant at The Hague, after taking his final vows at Saint-Germain-des-Prés and being ordained priest at Évreux, would be the act of a renegade.

He told his scruples to the young woman, and said, moreover, that if he married her he must be irrevocably shut out from France, his native country, which he loved, and where he hoped to die. She made answer: "You are in the right. But I love you, and will not leave you." He sailed for England, and she followed him there.

He left some debts behind him at The Hague. He had not contracted them on his own account, for his wants were small, but to help unfortunate compatriots. He had found no lack of them in Holland. He gave them what he had, and more. But the gazettes made it a reproach to him.

Prévost, having landed in England, found himself in a country that suited him. Hard worker as he was, he found employment among a hard-working people. He could turn his hand to anything, and began by being tutor to a young man of family. England pleased him. It is a land of sober fancies. There the fields lie under a brooding heaven. Melancholy steals in the morning mist across the thick-growing grass, across green churchyards where Hervey walks in sadness, or young Thomas Gray composes his elegies. Prévost brought to landscapes such as these the dreams of his own saddened and responsive soul, a soul never to be deadened, but easily troubled, and apt to gloomy fancies. The daily task, the necessity for working for his daily bread recalls him to the city. In his saunterings in one of the parks, he chanced to rub shoulders with an elderly man of wrinkled countenance, whose frame was agitated by some nervous affection and who appeared quite unconscious of what was going on in the world around him. The people jostled him and treated him with scant ceremony.

He was somewhat meanly dressed, and was, indeed, but a poor city printer, but his brain was peopled with dreams of men and women that were destined to enchant a whole generation; Pamela, Lovelace, Clarissa, and Clementina. That man was Samuel Richardson.

It was in London that Prévost published his second romance: *The History of Cleveland, a natural son of Cromwell.* It is the gloomiest story imaginable. Desert caves, demon-haunted islands, cannibal feasts, an old woman who opens her veins with a blunt knife to nourish a baby girl with her blood. Prévost scared himself with the horrors of his own creation, and revelled in his terror.

Happily, his mood changed, and not long after this he put together a short romantic tale which he tacked on to the *Memoirs of a Man of Quality*, apparently to get it read. He thought little of so simple a story: it was the *History of the Chevalier des Grieux and Manon Lescaut.* Manon loves with a lifelong love, and remains faithful for a week. She must have finery, she must have suppers; pleasure is the breath of life to her; even in the cart that conducts her to the Reformatory she charms us, and we must needs love her! The young nobleman who for her sake turns card-sharper and keeps a pack up his sleeve inspires pity of the sincerest. Both children are little worth, but they love one another; wait but until they are thoroughly unhappy, searchingly tried, and see to what heights they can rise. The same love that makes scoundrels can also create heroes. When death comes, in the desert, and Manon's pretty head is laid low; when only a memory of her survives, how full that memory of charm and tender pity. Many the man

who says on closing the book: "Oh, Manon, how I could love you, did you but live!" The little work is so natural, so true, so unerring. There is not a word one would have changed. When Prévost, in the simplest fashion in the world, had worked this miracle of art, he wrote a couple of pages of moral reflections to come in front of it; a muslin scarf as it were, cast over the shoulders of Mademoiselle Manon. He flatters himself, in this little foreword, that he has written something serviceable to public morals.*

* Here is the preface as it stands:

"The public has read with much pleasure the last volume of the *Memoirs of a Man of Quality* which contains the Adventures of the Chevalier des Grieux and Manon Lescot. In it, one sees a young man with brilliant and most lovable qualities who, led by an extravagant passion for a young girl who takes his fancy, prefers a libertine and vagabond life to all the advantages promised him by his talents and position; an unhappy slave of love, who sees misfortune coming upon him without having the strength to take steps to avoid it; who feels his unhappy state keenly, and is wholly submitted to it, and neglects all means to secure himself a happier existence; in short, a young man both vicious and virtuous, thinking right and acting wrong; lovable for his sentiments, detestable in his conduct. This makes a character singular enough. But Manon Lescot's is still more so. She knows what virtue means, she leans to it, and nevertheless she does the most shameful things.

"She loves the Chevalier des Grieux with absolute passion; yet her desire to shine and to live in plenty makes her false to her feeling for the Chevalier, and prefer before him a rich financier. What Art must have been called for to interest the reader and inspire him with compassion, seeing the sorrow and shame that fall on the wretched girl! Vicious as they both may be in their conduct, one pities them, for one recognizes that their disorderly life results from weakness and from the ardour of passion, and because they condemn their own deeds and confess their own wickedness. And so it is that their author, in exhibiting vice, does not instil it. He paints for us the effects of violent passion which listens not to reason when we are wholly given over to it; passion which cannot

·Very good. But it was when your book was finished, my dear Abbé, that you had these fine ideas. When your pen was racing along you were solely inspired by the memory of your youthful passions. It was thus that the Greek story-teller, who had seen the nymphs in the brake, went and told a tale of love.

But one must earn a living, and this necessity it was that was the chief preoccupation of the author of *Manon Lescaut*. To this end he conceived the notion of founding a literary gazette. Little publications of this kind, generally run by a single writer, were popular in those days. There had appeared one after another *News from the Republic of Letters*, the *Journal of Trévoux*, Leclerc's *Universal Library*, the *Literary Journal* of Salengre, the *Account of Some Learned Works* by Basnage, Camusat's *French Library*, Desfontain's *Parnassus Intelligencer*, Fréron's *Literary Annual*, etc. etc.

completely stifle all sentiment of virtue in the heart, but prevents its practice. In a word, this work exhibits the dangers of ungoverned nature. No young man, and certainly no young woman, would care to resemble the Chevalier and his mistress. Though they follow their pleasures, they are overwhelmed with remorse and misfortune.

"For the rest, the character of Tiberge, the good priest, the Chevalier's friend, is admirable. He is wise, and full of religion and piety; a tender and a generous friend; his heart is ever filled with compassion for his weaknesses.

"How piety is endeared to us when it inhabits a good disposition! I will say nothing concerning the style of this work. There is no vulgarity, no affectation, no sophisticated reflection—Nature herself holds the pen. Artifice and conceits would have made a pitiful showing. There is no running after wit, or what is called wit. The style is not laboured and laconic, it flows, full and expressive. It is not merely portrayal, and expression of sentiments, but the portrayal is from life, and the sentiments those of Nature.

Prévost called his Gazette *For and Against*. The title bespoke impartiality; he kept its promise, and, though he had enemies, he was not to be seduced into exaggerated language. Life had not spoilt him; he was still the same good fellow we knew at Rouen when, being insulted by a Jesuit, he held his peace rather than condescend to his adversary's tone. But if he had manners he had no method. The Gazette required it, so he tired of the Gazette, and after the first volume, he got Lefebvre de Saint-Marc to write it for him. Lefebvre de Saint-Marc was greatly in want of work to live by. Poor as an officer, poor as teacher, poor as publicist, he struggled valiantly, but only succeeded in exchanging one form of poverty for another. He had not edited the *For and Against* for long when the subscribers, seeing the difference of style, called on Prévost to take up the pen again. He yielded with a good grace, and began again at the third page of Volume III, not ill-pleased to find that he was not so easy to replace as he had thought.

His own Gazette having proved a success, he was torn to pieces by all the others. L'Abbé Lenglet Dufresnoy, in his, described him as a Medor who seduced maidens from their homes, and cheated innkeepers. Prévost defended himself and showed moderation and good taste. He was now thirty-eight, and his features began to show mark of his cares. He led a retired life, worked persistently, and would pass whole weeks in his study. His nature was gentle, and inclined to sadness. He eschewed all dancing and merry-making; an hour's talk with some sensible friend was his greatest pleasure.

But he longed for France. More than once he had been tempted to return secretly, but he was warned that it would entail troubles. He took the course of asking, openly, if he might go back. Cardinal de Bissy and the Prince de Conti supported him, and Prévost was given permission to show himself again in the kingdom of France in the garb of a secular priest. He asked nothing better. The Prince de Conti, to oblige him, asked to have him as Chaplain. It was a good post; but Prévost scrupled to accept it. He confessed to His Highness that he saw one particularly awkward obstacle. "I never say Mass." "I never attend it," replied the Prince.

Prévost accepted. His ministry, as one may suppose, left him plenty of leisure. He wrote from morning to night, producing romances, and histories which were also romance.

In 1736 he produced the *Doyen of Killerine*, which he himself announced as "a history adorned with every detail calculated to render its perusal useful and agreeable." The Abbé was not conceited, and his books were to him no source of vanity; but as he wrote a great deal he wanted to be read a great deal. He knew he was a good workman in letters, and, as we see, he hung an attractive sign outside a well-stocked shop. There issued from it in succession the *History of Margaret of Anjou*, the *History of a Modern Greek*, the *Philosophical Campaigns of Moncal*, the *Story of the Youth of Commander . . .*, the *Story of William the Conqueror*, the *Life of Cicero*, translated from Middleton, a translation of the *Letters of Brutus* and the *Familiar Letters*, the *Travels of Robert Lade*, the *Memoirs of an Honest Man*. I do not

remember all. Prévost could compose so easily that he could take his part in a conversation without interrupting his writing. His pen ran away with him.

He was leading his quiet life in his study, when some pamphleteer or other, I forget his name, came to ask his advice and help. The Abbé, who could never say no, lent his pen and his purse. The next thing that happened was that the Journal in which he had so lightly taken a hand proved displeasing to the authorities, and was seized. The police agents found some of Prévost's writings among the papers of the unlucky pamphleteer, and had they found Prévost he could have been lodged in the Bastille. The Prince de Conti enabled him to make his escape to Brussels, where happily he had not long to wait before this awkward business was settled.

Restored to his fireside, and recovered from this last of his tribulations, he set about a great undertaking. Chancellor Daguesseau invited him to edit a *General History of Travel*. In France people were beginning to be interested in the discoveries of the navigators; there was a desire to know how people live who do not live as we do. The preceding age had shown little curiosity on the subject; it had rested content with the vaguest notions about the Levantines, as they called them. Even the Turks were but little known. In the latter years of the century the narratives of Tavernier, Bernier, and Chardin gave the public some faint notion of Persia or India. Late in the lifetime of Prévost, the savage became a public favourite. The age recognized itself as old and corrupt; savages were young and innocent. Every one said: "Indians

and negroes have no newspapers; they do not go to the opera; they wear no clothes; they are admirable! They do not marry by contract, they are faithful to one another. Tell us all about their huts, their pirogues, and their virtues." The Emperor of China was held to be a philosopher, the Hurons were worthy to give laws to mankind.

Our good Prévost had not been to the Indies, but his romance of *Robert Lade* showed that he could handle the language of the sea and of the geography-books prettily enough, and could describe in vivid and attractive terms the ways and customs of savage peoples. He set about compiling his *General History of Travel*. There was one in course of publication in England at the moment, and although France was at war with that nation, and the two flags could not encounter one another on the seas without exchange of cannon, the British Admiralty did not cease to forward the sheets of their *History* to the Chancellery of France, as fast as they came from the printers.

Daguesseau passed them on to Prévost, who did little more than translate them. Unfortunately, this source soon failed him. The English publication stopped short, as once the walls of Carthage, and the Abbé had to pursue his labours alone; he compiled and compiled and compiled, and got to the end of America. A wealthy farmer of taxes found the means for the undertaking, and it ate up four thousand golden louis. Prévost edited fifteen volumes quarto without receiving a penny. The goods of this world tempted him not. "A garden, a cow, and some chickens are enough for me," he would say.

He was as unsuspicious as a child, and put himself quite ingenuously in the hands of François Didot, his bookseller, who paid him a louis a page for his books. The price was high, no doubt, but I am disposed to think that François Didot made a good bargain. They signed their agreements in a *cabaret* at the corner of the Rue de la Hachette, a place consecrated to business of that kind, and the volumes were sold in the shop on the Quai des Augustins, at the sign of the *Golden Bible*.

In a word, the Abbé Prévost was living sheltered from want. Pensioned by the Prince de Conti, and endowed with a priory worth twenty thousand livres a year, he occupied a house at Saint-Firmin, near Chantilly, belonging to the widow of a parliamentary advocate, and there he gave generous hospitality to the many friends his attractive disposition gathered around him.

Meanwhile, in London, Samuel Richardson, now an old man, had published *Clarissa Harlowe*, and the *History of Sir Charles Grandison*. Prévost, long familiar with English literature, translated these beautiful and touching romances, which inspired Rousseau to write his *Nouvelle Héloïse*, and moved Diderot to tears. Good Diderot was seen looking unhappy. "What is the matter with you?" "What has happened?" people asked. Was it, they inquired, his health, his affairs, his family, his friends? No, it was Clarissa Harlowe, whom he had left in danger, and who was giving him anxiety.* I do not know whether Prévost or

* See how, much later on, at the close of the century, these moving portraits of womankind could still be vivid and fresh in men's imagination. Andre Chenier, fixing the visions of a solitary

Letourneur gave the better rendering of the English text. I have a suspicion that the Abbé, while abbreviating it in detail, lengthened it as a whole. He wrote with a flowing pen, and what is quickly written is not always quickly read. It does not matter much; Prévost and Letourneur, by making Richardson known in France, offered Clarissa and Clementina to the love of every man who knew the worth of books, who could yield himself to a dream, or was capable of an unsullied emotion.

in his beautiful verse, mingles with his Julie the two English heroines, and says:

"He sees again, vivid as Life appears,
The charming ghosts we worship through our tears,
Those forms immortal that in memory dwell;
Julie, who loved o'ermuch, and, glorious, fell;
Clarissa's sainted look, where Heaven is all,
Whose grief is innocent of hate or gall,
Who suffers nor complains, nor murmuring dies—
And Clementine the loved, who, pure as the skies,
Suffering injustice at whatever cost
Loses not innocence though her mind is lost.
You, cherished shades, whose soft eyes yet may gleam,
Press to his thoughts, and occupy his dream;
His eyes are dimmed with tears; he lives with you,
Walks at your side, to one allurement true.
Resents their crime who foul oppression dare,
Loves those you love, and hates where you forbear
Sudden he thinks—mortal are pleasures all—
That these he weeps, all these he would recall,
Are naught, alas, but visions fond and vain,
Dream children of some giant heart and brain.
Rising, his thoughts in tumult, goes his way;
In dreamland then, let fancy have her play!
Yes, he will go, follow one face divine,
Seek, if he may not find, a Clémentine,
And in some wilderness' secure retreat,
Serve her, and worship her, and touch her feet."

Clarissa and *Grandison*, the works of an old man, translated by a man also ageing, stand for all that is purest in youth. Clarissa and Clementina appear all the more innocent and lovable in that they are ushered into the world by these two aged sponsors, Richardson and Prévost.

Richardson died in 1761 : age was advancing on Prévost, and therewith gravity. At sixty-seven he wrote the *Moral World*, a serious book which I have not read. He did not give up English literature. It was at Saint-Firmin that he translated the story of *Miss Radulphe Almoran and Hamlet*, and the *Letters of Mentor*. He worked on books of devotion and treatises intended to confound the unbeliever ; for, as I have said, he was not on the side of the philosophers, and had ever preferred God before all things, save women.

On Friday, November 25th, 1763, the Abbé Prévost, found lying inanimate on the road from Senlis to Saint-Firmin, was borne to Courteuil, to the priest's house, where vain attempts were made to recall him to life. The body, left in the church during the night, was carried next day to a house in the village, to be opened by the surgeons, who found "a great effusion of blood on the chest, caused by a rupture of the aorta."

The Benedictines, the order to which he used to belong, gave Dom Antoine Prévost burial in the priory church of Saint-Nicolas d'Acy.

BERNARDIN DE SAINT-PIERRE



OFT skies heavy with rain, and ocean, hidden in mist now thick, now thin, dying away on a shingly beach at the foot of the cliffs; a port where the King's ships would lie, the royal standard flying over rigging and bunting; the Norman landscape, apple trees in the close and cattle grazing the rich fields; the town house with its green courts and, without, the busy and shifting population of a port of traffic; such was the outlook, from his earliest childhood, of Jacques-Henri-Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, born January 19th, 1737, at Havre-de-Grâce, which lies between a smiling country-side, offering easy subsistence, and a sea beckoning to ambition and prompting to adventure. His father, Nicolas, proclaimed himself a descendant of the famous citizen of Calais, Eustache de Saint-Pierre, and as he had no means of proving this origin he insisted on it with vehemence. He was not well off. Henri-Bernardin was the eldest of two brothers and a sister. He was brought up with some indulgence, and a little haphazardly, by a pious and simple-minded mother who was fated to die young. Henri-Bernardin was fearful and sensitive as a child, of a quiet disposition, but not very docile. He tended his small garden when he was but eight years of age. He loved animals, wept for their

sufferings and comforted them as best he could. This feeling for animals, which scarcely exists save in big towns, he cherished with a tender ardour. He was not nine when his father took him to Rouen and showed him the Cathedral spire. "How high they fly!" said the child, who had eyes only for the swallows. In his ninth year he excited his mind by reading, in a ponderous tome, the Lives of the Fathers of the Desert.

One morning, when he had reason to fear punishment at school, he made off into the country with his lunch in his basket. He walked to the fringe of a little wood which he took to be a wilderness, and there he resolved to live as a hermit, in imitation of St. Paul and St. Jerome. He was confident that God would send him, on the morrow, his food by a raven. A serving-woman who ran in tears to look for him found him in this wood when the birds had already gone to rest.

He was sent to board with a curé at Caen, who gave instruction to children in a pretty presbytery hard by the gates of the town. There the chief feat performed by Henri-Bernardin was to steal some figs from an orchard watched by two dogs and a servant. He had no love for the curé's Latin. He was full of regrets for his mother, his sister, and his nurse, and thought tearfully of the happiness of the dog and parrot who lived in the home now lost to him. He was unhappy. At the end of ten months his godmother, seeing him in tears, obtained his withdrawal from the priest's house. This godmother of his was called Bernardine de Bayard. For all her great name and her proud look, she was poor. She had lived at Court. Through her, and through the tales she loved to

tell, his childhood was linked with the period of Louis XIV. Bernardin had not long been restored to his home, his garden, and the Lives of the Fathers of the Desert, when a neighbouring Capuchin, Brother Paul, took him on his rounds through the Norman country-side. There was good cheer, for he was a pretty child, and ladies gave him cakes to eat. The country was new to him, and the road was lightened by Brother Paul's talent for story-telling. Bernardin would now be a Capuchin. Shortly after this, he read *Robinson Crusoe*, given him by his godmother. Thenceforth everything else faded. He saw no other surroundings than a desert isle, llamas, parrots, and the faithful Friday. He broke the virgin soil, planted trees, raised his palisades. The enchantment lasted long. But, when he reached his twelfth year, his imagined solitudes brought him his first grief. He would have friends, women, whom he should govern, for he was ambitious. All his life long he was to redream this childish dream, and, unsociable philanthropist as he was, to promulgate chimerical laws to imaginary beings. While Henri-Bernardin was thus wrapped in dreams, his uncle, Captain Godebout, was fitting out a ship for Martinique. The youth begged to be taken on board. His father gave way. Bernardin embarked, full of illusion, and assured in advance of being king of some distant isle. Sea-sickness, the long monotony of the voyage, the rough ways of Captain Godebout, disheartened him. He came back disgusted with life at sea. M. Nicolas did not know what to do with so ardent and erratic a son. Bernardin's godmother managed to have him sent to the Jesuits at Caen.

Letters full of edification, recitals of missionaries, the acts of their martyrs, were his daily food. His imagination took fire; the Jesuits won him over. Bernardin, in his fervour, already saw himself sailing from island to island, allaying the tempest, converting the savage. Tigers licked his feet; dolphins brought him his crucifix from the depths of the sea. He announced to his director that he would be a voyager and a martyr. The Father listened without betraying too much amusement, and promised to put him in the way of becoming both the one and the other. M. Nicolas, fearing some folly to come, withdrew his son, who was induced, without much trouble, to enter the college at Rouen, where he did his course of philosophy and carried off the first prize in mathematics in 1757.

The home of his birth was henceforth closed to him. His mother was dead; M. Nicolas had married again, and gave his son no more money. The young Chevalier, as they called him, after a year's study at the school of civil engineers, sought service as an engineer in the Army. It was war-time. He repaired to Versailles with a friend. They had no introductions, but the minister, who had been approached on behalf of two young men, thought that these were they, and straightway set his signature to a couple of brevets.

The Chevalier was attached to the Staff, with a hundred louis in pay and a gratuity of six hundred francs. He was twenty-three; he joined the campaign in high hopes, reported himself at Düsseldorf, where the Comte de Saint-Germain was gathering an army, and, ordered on reconnaissance, saw fields laid waste and villages given to the

flames. Livy, and his tutors, had not led him to imagine that war had so ugly an aspect. He was rolled over in a cavalry charge, in the course of a victory, and things looked worse still when the Chevalier du Muy, who had replaced the Comte de Saint-Germain, brought but defeat and disorder into the camp. Saint-Pierre, thrown with the rest of the army into La Dymel, saved himself by swimming, under musket-fire. The stream and the rocks were thick with bodies clad in the blue and white uniforms. The young officer failed to please his chiefs, who rebuked him for disobedience. He was relieved of his duty, and sent back to France.

The peace of the paternal roof would have been welcome, but his stepmother let him know that he was not wanted there. He retrod the road to Paris, with the twelve louis that remained to him. Malta—it was in 1761—was menaced by the Turks. To Malta he went, without brevet or commission. The officers of engineers did not accept him as one of them. He had to live at his own expense in the island, in embittered solitude. People took him for a madman and laughed at him. And, as it turned out, no Turks made their appearance.

He took passage on a Danish vessel sailing for Marseilles. After long beating to windward, the ship was becalmed off the coast of Sicily, in shallow water where their hull risked scraping the ground. Followed rain, wind, and thunder storms, and breaking waves. She heeled, and no longer answered her helm. The morrow broke fine, and they soon sighted the coasts of Provence. Saint-Pierre wept at the sight of the olive groves. He made his way to Paris, and took a room in that same Rue des

Maçons where Jean Racine had at one time lodged with his wife and children. He waited upon people, wrote letters, solicited employment in all manner of ways, but in vain. He lodged a memorial with the Government, proposing to take ship by himself and take soundings of all the English coast. No one took any notice of him. His landlady threatened to turn him out, and the baker refused to let him have any more bread. In despair of ever seeing himself an engineer in the King's service, he was again taken with the notion of founding a republic, of becoming an Orpheus, of setting up on the shores of the Aral Sea the rule of the *Télémaque*. To this end he borrowed a few louis, sold his wardrobe, mounted the diligence for Brussels with little baggage about him, and alighted at The Hague.

Here he visited the Hanoverian Ambassador, the old Baron de Sparken, to whom he delivered a letter of introduction. But it chanced that the Baron, deeply engaged in seeking the philosopher's stone, was quite unable to call to mind the person who had signed the letter. The Chevalier, dismissed by the Baron, who took him for an alchemist and suspected him of making gold and of being unwilling to confess it, found himself quite destitute. In this embarrassed condition he was wandering through the town, when he chanced upon a certain M. Muztel, a gazetteer and a worthy man withal, who was wont to smoke his porcelain pipe in his arbour with his family around him. It so happened that he was a brother of one of Bernardin's former schoolmasters. M. Muztel, good man, offered our Chevalier the hand of a kinswoman in marriage and a thousand écus to write in the gazette. But the

Chevalier was not to be turned from his republic by any prospect of telling in domestic bliss home truths to the Dutch. He only took enough money from M. Muztel to get to Lübeck. There he borrowed two hundred francs more. Prospective founders of states have no qualms about running into debt.

These were the days when Catherine, the young wife of Peter III, having played her part in the conspiracies of Princess Daschkoff, was crowned Czarina, after the murder of the Czar. Catherine, for all her emancipated mind, had lived the life of a slave, undistinguished from the herd of concubines who obeyed the lash of a drunken Czar. Her oppressed youth was an experience rare to crowned heads. She had lived the life of the common people and endured the weight of servitude. As with Frederick, suffering taught her to rule.

In France, philosophers hailed the advent of an Empress who was to abolish torture and pave the way for the abolition of serfdom. Each and every ambition that languished in fireless garrets in Paris, now awoke, and turned to the "Semiramis of the North." The Chevalier de Saint-Pierre was not behindhand in rolling up his maps and in buckling his slender valise. Taking ship for St. Petersburg, he found himself on board with actors, dancers, and wig-makers, on their way, like himself, to seek their fortunes at the new Court. Philosophers and hairdressers alike put their hopes in this erudite but unconventional Empress. Saint-Pierre was alarmed lest his republic should be forestalled, and important cities rise without his help on the shores of the Aral Sea. Landing on the quays of the Neva, he found himself very much

alone, amidst all these long-bearded men who soberly sought the shelter of their dwellings. He had but six livres in his vest-pocket, and the Empress had gone to Moscow for her coronation. But the Chevalier, with his fine blue eyes and his fine projects, found protection. He left for Moscow in the suite of some General, in a sleigh that was frequently capsized in the snow. He was nearly frozen to death, and ate bread that had to be cut with a hatchet. A pack of wolves howled mournfully in their wake. It was then that he fell a-dreaming of the fields and hill-sides of France. At last the gilded cupolas of Moscow came in view. After various sufferings he obtained, from a French General in the Russian service, a sub-lieutenancy in the engineers, and could wear a scarlet coat with black facings, a doe-skin waistcoat, white silk stockings, and a fine feather in his hat. Another Frenchman, M. de Villebois, promised the subaltern to present him to Catherine.

Bernardin read over the plan for his republic, bolstered himself up with the notion that a colony on the Aral Sea would reopen to the commerce of the Empire the ancient channel of the wealth of the Indies, and looked up in Plutarch some telling passages which he reckoned on quoting to the Empress. The much-wished-for day came at length. The subaltern of engineers was conducted to a magnificent gallery, among great nobles resplendent in gold, chains of office and precious stones. A door opened, a great silence fell, and the Empress appeared. She held out a fair hand to the young soldier of fortune, which he kissed, his knee on the ground according to rule. She spoke a gracious word or two, and passed on. He had not

opened his mouth. It was all over with his Atlantis, and the golden age it should have witnessed.

He stayed four years in Russia, in the service of a Government he had no wish to serve, embittered, impatient, and nursing new chimeras. At last he threw up his commission and went to Poland. Catherine wanted to give the Poles for their King a discarded lover named Poniatowski. Her choice was approved by Frederick of Prussia, for the simple reason that it would humiliate Poland. The Polish nobles resisted this foreign intervention. Radziwil, Palatine of Vilna, a gigantic savage, clad in the skin of a bear he had strangled with his own hands, came from the forests of Lithuania and made appeal to the country whose heroic image he seemed to embody, to strike a blow for freedom. Saint-Pierre, finding himself at Warsaw, beheld there noblemen gorgeous in silks and furs, glittering in Oriental splendour amid a crowd of janissaries, spahis, and their Uhlans. By night he saw troops of moustached gentlemen poor and proud sleeping on the staircases of the great, and all round him, on the land, serfs stupefied with misery. At Warsaw, unpaved and unlighted, one of Radziwil's family, the young Princess Marie Miesnick, opened her doors to the young soldier of fortune. She was one of those daughters of Poland "playful as kittens, white as cream, with eyes as bright as the stars." She possessed, moreover, a charming wit, and displayed that Horatian wisdom which was then in fashion. Saint-Pierre lived by her side in the midst of Starosts and Palatines, in a world of fashion that united the vivacity of Europe with the magnificence of Asia. They danced the Polonaise, they drank the wines of Hungary; they enacted

the tragedies of Racine. Saint-Pierre was *Achille*, the Princess Cunégonde was *Iphigénie*. But when he left the salons, and the gardens illumined for balls and suppers with wreaths of lights, and regained his narrow room rented at fifty ducats, he would think with bitterness of his fortune still unmade. As much to make his mark as to give pleasure to Marie Miesnick, he threw himself on a madcap venture, with one companion, across country held by Poniatowski's cavalry, to join Radziwil then entrenched between Nievwitz and Stuck, and in no way in need of an engineer. This plan of campaign, arranged by the Princess after a supper party one night, was absurd. The very first night, Saint-Pierre was stopped by Uhlans. To gain his release, he had to give an undertaking not to carry arms during the interregnum. The Princess Miesnick, touched by this piece of foolhardiness, and by the prepossessing looks of the young Frenchman, bore him away to her château. One day, so the tale goes, when he was walking, alone and melancholy, in the park, chance, which presides over romance and comedy, led him to meet his hostess on a path bordered with violets and strawberries, as in a wood in France. Already had they exchanged vague words and soft nothings, when a sudden storm, bringing shadow and rain, drove them into a rustic summer-house. It was their grotto of Dido. Perhaps they may have already dreamed of some such Virgilian retreat; for Princess Marie was capable of reading the purple passages of the *Æneid*.

She seems to have been a kind, intelligent, and gracious creature. She was humane with her serfs. Humanity was then a French fashion, like

powder and patches. The Man of Taste was become the Man of Feeling. Feudal Europe was sensible of the passage of a warm breath of benevolence, of human pity. At first the Chevalier was moderate in the enjoyment of his good fortune. Though incapable of a passion which would have taken him out of himself, and divested him of his naïve egoism and wild ambitions, he was sensuous, as poets are, and vain like other men. A pretty woman, and a Princess, pleased his vanity and his senses. Here was an oasis for the traveller, a scented garden where he rested. Marie was not prudent when in love; she quickly became so when she loved no longer; and this happened about a twelvemonth after the episode of the Virgilian storm and the rustic grotto. It then suddenly dawned upon her that her friend was no match in discretion for St. John Nepomucene, patron saint of Hungary, Bohemia, and Poland, and that their secret was the talk of Warsaw. She acquainted the Chevalier with her discovery, and spoke of her mother, of whom she had been somewhat forgetful for a year past, and whose reproaches now lent seasonable fervour to Marie's repentance. Saint-Pierre was now weary of Poland. Poniatowski, whom he had gone forth to fight, but who had not been sensibly hindered thereby, had become King, as was to be expected. He offered the young soldier an appointment in his artillery. But the appointment was only worth four hundred ducats. Saint-Pierre judged the pay meagre, and felt humiliated. He thought he would take service in Austria, having great expectations of Vienna, where he had never been.

Their parting was not cruel. The Princess was

gentle in her dismissal, as she was gentle in birth. She even wrote to him in Vienna. The letters were polite, but not to be misunderstood. The Chevalier, finding no opening for his services in Vienna, returned to Warsaw in the sulks, and found the Princess entertaining largely. There was no sign of her shutting herself up in a hermitage because she had parted with the Chevalier. But the Chevalier was in no humour to show a pleasant countenance at other people's merry-making. He could not tolerate the violins and illuminations which had an air of celebrating his absence. He joined the festivities uninvited, wandered drearily about among the guests, stayed on indiscreetly to the end, and when Marie was alone forced a most unwelcome interview upon her. This time he was given to know most unmistakably that he was no longer loved. He had never been madly in love, but he was furious at losing so pleasant and useful a friend. A pretty woman is a precious and welcome possession in herself, and this particular one had provided him with money (which he returned) and with many letters of recommendation.

At last he made up his mind, his bad humour continuing, to seek service in Saxony against Poland, if only for the sake of carrying fire and sword into Marie's household. At Dresden he found no captain's commission, but an affair of the heart which gave him sweeter means of revenge. He forgot the faithless Sarmatian in the arms of a fair Saxon who, in her way, copied our own Ninon. Thence he went to Berlin, where he saw nothing but soldiers in the streets and gaiters on the window-sills. He visited Potsdam, that magnificent barracks. He asked for a Major's commission, which Frederick

refused him, and refused an appointment in the engineers which Frederick offered him. He refused furthermore the hand of a pretty girl of the name of Virginie, offered him by an excellent bourgeois. He then left Berlin and came back to France after all these fruitless excursions, having gained nothing because he had aimed at nothing.

At Havre, the old servant of his childhood rose up as he came, laid by her spindle and said, "Ah, Monsieur Henri, times are changed indeed. Your father is dead, your brothers are in the Indies, your sister in the convent. And I am here alone." And she wiped her eyes on the corner of her canvas apron. While the soldier of fortune ate his omelet and brown bread, and drank his mug of cider, they recalled the Saints of the Wilderness and the little lad who had gone to be a hermit in the woods.

And then Saint-Pierre took the road to Paris once more, the road trodden by all who seek their fortune. He took a room at the parish priest's at Ville-d'Avray, and lived there in the village with his dog, far from mankind, whose contact chilled him and gave him pain. All the same, not being far distant from Versailles, he forwarded memoranda which had not been asked for, and claimed repayment to which he had no right. But he was poor and wanted a living; he had a vague sense of having power to accomplish something uncommon. Hence his great restlessness, his insistent demands on officialdom, and, at every turn, his high-pitched lamentations.

M. de Breteuil, who had known him in St. Petersburg, and wished him well, sent him a commission in the royal engineers for Ile de France, advising him that his actual destination was

Madagascar, where he was to repair Fort Dauphin. He was given to understand that he would be at liberty to civilize the great island in his own fashion, for it was still in savagery and infested with warlike tribes. He was introduced to the leader of the undertaking, a Colonial from Ile de France, the Chevalier de Saint-Louis, a man abounding in maxims of philosophy. A linen draper had to give the African legislator credit for some shirts. The *Marquis de Castries*, a ship of six hundred tons burthen, at last set sail. Saint-Pierre was on board her, with his dog, Favori, his books, and his compasses. Uplifted at the notion of carrying the gospel and the Encyclopædia among the natives of Madagascar, his mind ran on the promised republic, once on the Aral Sea, but now assuredly on the African Isle. Gold, the source of all evil, should be banished thence. The changing seasons and the work of the fields were to be marked by feasts. A temple of verdure should extend below the fort, and there should meet, in peace, all the peoples of the Island, all the peoples of the world. But he was vexed to see that all the colonists on board with him were singers and dancers. At any rate, he thought he could use them to make virtue attractive to the savage. But when the leader of the expedition confided to him that he was but a coloniser in appearance, and that his real object was to capture blacks and sell them, Saint-Pierre was thunderstruck. Steal his citizens, his subjects, the subjects for his Virtue!

He did not like the sea. They had a bad passage In the Mozambique Channel they lost their mainmast in a storm; scurvy played havoc with the crew. The sick were laid on deck in the sun,

where they died even as they spoke. Ile de France, which had looked so fair in his dreams, impressed him as arid, too harsh and too rocky for his soft imaginings. He had only seen Port Louis. He asked to stop there and, since his commission was in order, they kept him there. His overmastering discontent again took possession of him. Happiness, for him, was now flown to some acre of ground, some small house, in the proximity of Paris. His next desire, under the African sun, was for the snows of Finland, for "forests tossing under the eternal northern gales." Such disquiet is as old as humanity itself. "Quickly thou changest, and nothing gives thee joy," said Euripides. "What is before thee pleases not, and thou preferest that which is far removed. . . . The life of man is wholly sorrowful . . . and we are vainly stirred by lies. . . ." At Port Louis he saw M. Poivre, a peace-loving person, crippled in the Wars, then Commissioner of Ile de France and Ile de Bourbon, where he introduced spice cultivation. His rule was beneficent; but whether the practical good works of M. Poivre roused some sense of shame in the chimerical lawgiver, or whether Saint-Pierre, according to his wont, had expected too much of the Commissioner, he fell out with a man whose friendship might have honoured him. He was put out, felt sorry for himself, wrote letters bitter to gone, groaned over the regulation of expenditure. He could not pardon M. de la Bourdonnais for having raised the price of commodities along with the increase of the island commerce. The frightful misery of the black slaves offended his eyes, and augmented his wretchedness. Nature gave him relief from men. He made the tour of the island

on foot, with two blacks, along the beaches bordered with mangroves and couch-grass, fording rivers, climbing hills, feasting his eyes on the languid beauty of the picture, halting at times to dwell on the upward sweep of a palm, the strong wings of a bird of prey, the plant-like form of a madrepore, content and charmed. In his love for the glowing soil, he must walk bare-foot, like the blacks, on the wet beaches. This return to nature cost him a sunstroke, and a cruel night of fever. He put on his boots again as soon as he could. In the course of his excursion he would sup at nightfall, wherever a shelter offered. Where the women and the fruits of the earth were pleasing, there could he live and die. And then he went on again.

The image of Marie came back to him in Ile de France. Later on he came to associate the Pamplemousses with his dreams of love.

When, after two years' sojourn on the island, he returned to Paris, he printed his journal of travel, a volume of unstudied science and sympathetic imagination, full of true and sensitive description. The book, though it attracted scanty public notice, gained the author admittance to the Salon of the Encyclopædists, where Mademoiselle de Lespinasse held sway. D'Alembert, then famous, had himself taken the manuscript to the bookseller, but when Saint-Pierre went to claim the thousand francs which were due to him the bookseller, whose business was not flourishing, abused the unfortunate author, and did not pay. Mademoiselle de Lespinasse was so frivolous as to laugh at this misadventure. In the opinion of certain of the philosophers, Saint-Pierre should have thrashed the man. Saint-Pierre excused himself on the

grounds of philanthropy. Mademoiselle de Lespinasse held him out her bon-bon box. "You are so sweet and good," she said. Another adventure drew a more malicious smile from Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, who was as given to mockery as she was kind. The wife of a certain surveyor of taxes sent her husband one day to Versailles to make interest for Saint-Pierre, and at the same time sent for Saint-Pierre to let him know that he was agreeable to her. Whether it was that he shrank from being false to a man who was doing a service to him, and was afraid that, should the thing become known to him, he would lose a useful friend, or whether he had some quite other reason, Saint-Pierre fled and left his cloak behind him. Unfortunately for him he related this affair with too much complacence. The philosophers found it entertaining. Mademoiselle de Lespinasse made a point of asking the hero of it for his recital when there was a numerous company gathered. But when he came to his exhibition of virtue, she would interrupt him, with a smile, saying: "Really now, we won't refer to that."

Saint-Pierre was offended and withdrew. D'Alembert tried to bring him back, in a letter full of affection and soothing words, as one uses to a sick man. He praised Bernardin for not breaking the bookseller's head. He protested the good intentions of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, suffering as she was from fever at the time. "It would be to do her a great injustice," he said, "to believe that she made your melancholy a subject of reproach to you." But nothing was of avail, and Saint-Pierre remained in dudgeon. Moreover, profound differences of opinion divided him from

the Encyclopædists. They thought little of his science, which was vague and clouded with imaginings; they had an ill-perception of his delicate and dreamy genius. And, what was more, he expounded God, and set himself up against them as the Champion of Providence. He left their company, shut himself up, and became a solitary.

With no further hope of founding a republic on any island or lake-side, he resolved, in his own words, to draw water from his own well. He conceived the idea of compiling a great book on Nature, and made a beginning of it in a furnished room in the Rue de la Madeleine. In 1781 he took a little turret-chamber in the Rue Neuve-Saint-Etienne-du-Mont.

It was a silent street and all gay with gardens. There Rollin had had his house and orchard. The good priest, who drew his sustenance from the flowers of ancient literature, and was known as the Bee, had there watched his bees drawing theirs from his fruit-blossoms and had trembled for his peach and apricot trees on nights when the cold had little troubled himself. There he had lived in peace and died in hope. Saint-Pierre came in his turn to live and think, and wish, and suffer, in that same spot, consecrated by tradition to study and right living. Green-painted gates gave entrance to the visitor. Off the courtyard, on the right, a small staircase must be mounted to the top. The tenement was clean and well kept, but the gloomy tenant of the chamber expressed his fear, in bad weather, of being carried away in a gale of wind along with his shaky turret. "Even if the dog days are temperate, I shall be roasted," he said, "and if I escape that I must infallibly be frozen

in January." And he impressed on M. Hennin, his adviser, that he must come and visit him in the mild seasons. And thither M. Hennin, head-clerk in the Foreign Office, under M. de Vergennes, came, happy to escape from Versailles for the day. Seated at the walnut table with its town provender, the talk was all of the dairy and the fruit garden, for the pastoral was in vogue, and the Queen had her farm at Trianon. After dinner Saint-Pierre mixed seaman's grog, forgot himself and his troubles, became genial and unaffected. On the window-ledge, giving on to a garden, he had a strawberry plant growing.

When winter was over, and the first violet put up its head, the solitary would quit his keep, at early dawn, and go on foot to Versailles to visit M. Hennin. And in the course of his walk his love of nature and his feeling for her works would intrude themselves on his personal cares. Moonlight nights would be chosen that he might see his way home. Sometimes the moon would be hidden, and thus betray him, and put him in danger of falling into ruts or of losing himself in the dark. More than once he got back soaked to the skin. Annoyances slight enough, no doubt; but the lightest assaults of fortune, even as the severest, would depress his sensitive being.

A mischance that befell his brother Dutailly, who had managed to get himself incarcerated in the Bastille for some ugly business, was a great trouble to him. Dutailly, in his cell, lost the little reason that had been his. Saint-Pierre wrote to him, to enlighten his mind, a letter in which he spoke of Xenophon and the Caduzians, of the New World, of the fruits of the calabash tree, and of Potiphar,

for the story of Joseph and Potiphar was dear to his heart. His letter formed quite a manual of Stoic philosophy, and certainly if the poor madman could have been reached by its teaching he might have become another Epictetus.

At this period Saint-Pierre had an enthusiasm for Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who was copying music for his living in his poor dwelling in the Rue de la Plâtrière. It was an extraordinary friendship. They were continually falling out. Bernardin sent Jean-Jacques some coffee. Jean-Jacques wrote: "As I am in no position to give presents, it is my custom, in order that I may escape unequal social conditions, to avoid those who bestow them on me; you are free to leave this coffee or to send for it back; but, should you do the former, pray be content with my thanks, and let the matter rest there." Bernardin had found his master. When they had made it up again, they would walk together about the Prés-Saint-Gervais and Mont-Valérien, discoursing on Providence, on virtue, and on Nature. And then they would be silent awhile that they might the better contemplate the sunset and the clouds.

Still, from the recesses of his solitude, Saint-Pierre importuned M. Hennin with his solicitations. He would have indemnification, and he described exactly what shape it should take; and then haughtily refused what he had importunately asked for. The refusal was for form's sake, and yielded to entreaty. For this terrible person would have his acceptance of public money regarded as a favour. When M. Hennin, overburdened with work, his sight failing and more than half gone, kept him some days without an answer Saint-

Pierre bewailed himself, denounced his patron, overwhelmed him with reproaches mingled with pardons and farewells more intolerable still. Any man but this warm-hearted and wise-headed Hennin would have lost all patience. Hennin wrote one day: "You are good in nature, and simple, and a modest man, but at times you seem to take your friend Jean-Jacques for model, the vainest of mankind."

Saint-Pierre saw naught but blackness and treachery on every side. If his tale was to be believed, the Baron de Breteuil, who had helped him, was now his persecutor. He had been a father to him, he was now an enemy. To be unhappy was then the fashion. It was Rousseau's teaching, that virtue and unhappiness were two inseparables. Delisle de Salles, seeing Orpheus as a sort of faraway Turgot, said: "Orpheus had virtue; he was persecuted." Saint-Pierre said to himself: "I spend my days far from mankind, whom I have desired to serve but who have persecuted me."

At last his reason became affected. A strange malady beset him. His vision was crossed with sudden lights. He saw things double, and nothing steadily. He saw two suns above the horizon. He was shaken by causeless fears. He could not cross the Seine in a boat without trembling, nor pass a sheet of water in a garden. He found it impossible to stay in a room full of people, particularly if the doors and windows were shut. If he crossed a public resort, the passers-by looked evilly upon him, mocked him, followed him to his undoing. But sitting in the Tuileries among the box-walks he would watch the children at play, and their clear

voices brought him calm. "When the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, David took an harp and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and the evil spirit departed from him." The ill that weighed upon this other solitary wanderer was the heaven-born sickness of an over-full heart that would surge over and break into a thousand shapes of charm. Saint-Pierre was then big with, and labouring to produce, the lively, animated pages of his *Études de la nature*. It was the crisis. Later on, with these days in his recollection, he said: "There have been moments when I caught a glimpse of the heavens, suffering in truth unspeakable miseries in this world."

The manuscript of the *Études* was refused by various booksellers. The author resolved to publish at his own expense. He was poor indeed at the time. In June (1784) he was wearing his winter coat, and went clad in wool like any sheep. He borrowed the necessary money from his friends, for he had no lack of them. Man of sorrows and sick as he was, he had his attraction, his charm. The *Études* appeared in 1784. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, unknown before, became, of a sudden, illustrious. He was then forty-seven. It was just what was wanted, the book every one was waiting for. Society under Louis XVI gazed with admiration on nature as exhibited in the English garden, dwelt on the melancholy of willows bent above artificial brooklets, and built ruins in its parks. This elegant Society found, in the *Études*, landscape and sentiment to its taste, a Nature not too remote from the Muette and the Petit Trianon, and all the exotic growths suited to the age of Abbé Raynal and M. Poivre.

People quoted the example of the Emperor of China who celebrated the agricultural feasts. They must have groves, and charming maidens in them, and gossip. Tombs found fit setting on islands The tomb of Jean-Jacques, at Ermenonville, was quite delicious. His epitaph, by Ducis, was read with tears:

> "Jean-Jacques Rousseau lies sleeping here
> Where peaceful poplars wave.
> All good and feeling hearts, draw near;
> Your friend is in this grave."

Saint-Pierre would have had the tomb set on a reef. "Can you," he wrote, "have passion and sentiment proceed from rocks? Let this tomb, that of a man virtuous and ill-starred, rise from amid breakers, and on it read but 'Here rests J.-J. Rousseau.'" He also made a tomb for Philoctetes, "dead, abandoned by the Greeks whom he had served."

These studies, which he had made without means, far from museums of natural history, laboratories, and libraries, could be pursued by all and remade according to their liking. Lovers wandering in a park might repeat its beautiful passages without forgetting their pastime. Bernardin, at his strawberry plants in the Rue Saint-Étienne-du-Mont, had half the world on show. Charming! Henceforth every person of feeling could contemplate at ease, in his dressing-gown or nightshirt, God's works on his window-sill.

In this, his new volume, was a science more attractive to women than that of the Encyclopædia, and systems easy of development, and novelties of light interest. Bernardin spoke in praise of Ignorance, and its charm: he owned himself ignorant, and hazarded the most dangerous theories. He

attributed the tides to the monthly melting of the polar snows, and the melting of the snows to the warmth of the moon. He would have no flattening of the earth at the poles. He did not believe in gravitation. In the salons it was a new amusement to take sides with him against Maupertuis and Newton.

And he was a deist. He was religious by nature, and he professed deism. Fénelon called, in proof of the existençe of God, the spectacle of the heavens, and the fields of earth. Bernardin was bent on proving God by means of the coleoptera, of madrepores, and fruit-buds. He set out the divine plan by the card, with indefatigable sympathy and unfailing light of insight. Divine wisdom shone brightly from the oily skin of the negro. To him Providence was sufficiently obvious from the mere fact that animals, not having the secret of fire, ran no risk of roasting each other in the woods. He had a reason for everything, and went a long way towards the discovery of first causes. Men learned from him that dates grew on palm trees for the purpose of being eaten. Although Buffon, in his *Époques*, published some six years before, had exhibited some idea of what cosmic forces were, Bernardin would have it that the world was made at a stroke, with its hoary oaks, its extinct volcanoes, and its sea-shells on the mountain-tops. It was the making of him. All the deists were his. The clergy made advances, and thought of rallying to him. Bernardin, in his simplicity of soul, would have accepted a Church benefice, but the bishops, on reflection, saw that they might as well at once accept Jean-Jacques and the *Vicaire savoyard*.

In 1788 he added to his *Études de la nature* a little pastoral romance, a sort of modern *Daphnis and Chloe*, a smooth idyll which he entitled *Paul et Virginie*, the history of two children. He read *Paul et Virginie* at the house of M. Necker, then minister, and very popular because he made even finance sentimental. Madame Necker, Buffon, the Abbé Galiani, and Thomas, were present at the reading. Buffon looked at his watch before it was over, and called for his carriage, Thomas had gone to sleep, Madame Necker thought that it dragged in places and bore a wearisome moral. Saint-Pierre went away out of heart. But the public was neither weary nor bored. It was enchanted. It wept.

And it certainly is a very touching story, this tale of the two children from Europe, who love, in all innocence, on a virgin soil. Bernardin made a cradle for the pair, who were never to wed, in a ravine in Ile de France. Not the Ile de France as he originally saw it, in the days of his discontent, and in all the misery of slavery; but as he now evoked it by his poetic imagination, in all its sweet and aboriginal beauty, distant, but vivid in memory, with tardy regrets, and the feeling of yearning for something lost. The landscape is lent a beauty by the beauty of its living beings. Nature is under a spell laid on it by the soul in the two children. This was Bernardin's remarkable magic. The old man who, by the author's device, tells the tale of Paul and Virginie, is no simple settler; he speaks like a Raynal or a Rousseau, and would seem to have visited the salon of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse. But Nature speaks to him, and he makes her speak. Paul himself is no child of the wilds; he has read romance. The old man, when Virginie is not on

the scene, uses every effort to dissuade him from seeking publicity in Paris: "Talent is costly," the scholar tells the child, "its price is privation of every kind, and an exquisite sensibility that brings unhappiness to the soul." But the child knows love, and his love is pure and wholesome as the breath of the woods. Virginie is a pretty damsel, but true ardour is in her, and her blue eyes can grow dark. Her delicate virtue is not of a pattern that grows wild in the fields. She dies rather than expose her body. Such modesty is one of the rarest blooms on that tree of Diderot's, the tree of moral growth, "whereon the slightest virtues, if virtues may be slight, attach like leaves to a branch, which loses its glory with its leafage."

How are we now to keep in mind that attic in the Rue Saint-Étienne which saw and held so much absurdity and unfairness? How can we but overlook the sordid cares of the man, when from his bosom he has drawn two characters to charm us for evermore? Had Virginie been his only love, he had loved, and was good; he still charms a world.

Bernardin, henceforth a celebrity, and furnished with some money, left his turret-chamber. His dream had always been to have a hermitage. He bought, in the heart of an out-of-the-way district, in the Rue de la Reine-Blanche, near the Barrière des Gobelins, a small house and garden for which he paid five thousand livres, in addition to charges, King's taxes, and repairs. He whitewashed his walls, put shutters on his windows, and laid out three beds in his garden: one for flowers, one for vegetables and the third for fruit trees.

Visitors and correspondence invaded the hermitage. Madame de Genlis brought the Duke

d'Orlean's children. Mesdames de Coislin, de Grammont, de Chabannes, Princess Lubomirska, repaired thither; Madame de Krudner hastened to him. She found the hermit in his garden, an aviary and a beehive on either hand.

He continued his letters to M. Hennin because he had affection for him, and also because he had not lost his practice of solicitation. But sometimes his request would take graceful shape. One day he asked the chief clerk for some larkspur seeds "in order," he said, "that the flowers' beautiful colour might be to him a reminder of Madame Hennin's blue eyes."

The women, mostly romantics in that day, were all more or less in love with the man of feeling who had created *Paul et Virginie*. A young lady of Lausanne wrote and offered him her hand. She was a Protestant, and made it a condition that he should become one, that they might be reunited in heaven and live there in an eternity of love. Bernardin replied, with some discernment, that before knowing an eternity of love they must know one another here below. And the matter went no farther. It was not the only proposal of marriage that was made him. In 1788, Abbé Fauchet offered him his niece. His niece was eighteen, and without fortune; she came, said Fauchet, straight from Nature' hand. Bernardin was not so much tempted as one might think, though for some time past he had thought of marrying. True, Nature was dear to his heart, but as he himself had admitted a couple of years before to M. Guys, a Marseillais, he did not altogether jib at taking a wife "from the temple of Fortune," should she offer. Not that he was desirous of

wealth; but when one is over fifty one does not set out light-heartedly on the beggar's high road.

In the course of two or three years he began to hear, in the shade of public gardens, hundreds of mothers and nurses calling, "Paul, be quiet . . . Virginie, come here. . . ." He was foster-father to all those Pauls and Virginies whose mothers he had moved to tears.

And Marie-Antoinette, dining with her friend, the Comtesse de Polignac, spoke of the *Études de la nature*, and of the birds, described by Bernardin, whose breasts reddened in the season of love. And so, in scattering his delightful flowers of speech, he gathered the smiles of beauty. He was proclaimed worthy of the table of the gods, and of the couch of goddesses. By a contrast more piquant than displeasing, he was a determined grumbler, and sulked under all these caresses. He came to Malmaison, to Madame Lecoulteux de Moley, with his dog, and there he bewailed his lot. His dog was ill. They gave it physic, and it died. Bernardin did not come down to breakfast, and they sought him in his room. They found a note saying that they had killed his dog, and so he had left. The ladies were melted. They gave funeral to the dog, the Sage's friend, and raised a tomb in the garden, under a willow tree.

In 1789 the King gave him a pension of 1200 livres. *Paul et Virginie* would have made him rich but for the pirated reprints, which were innumerable.

In September of the same year he published the *Vœux d'un Solitaire*. These aspirations contained nothing very definite. He asked that the King should give his sanction to the laws, he pleaded on

behalf of the peasants despoiled by the taxes, and for the negroes in the colonies. Beyond that he was for the laws of Minos. The Bastille had fallen, Bailly was Mayor of Paris, the Assembly was sitting. He thought the Revolution over, and prophesied the return of the Golden Age and an era of happiness for mankind.

On Buffon's decease in 1792 he was appointed keeper of the Royal Gardens. His means were now assured, and he thought about getting married. Except for his nerves and his rheumatism, which gave him something to complain about, his health was good, and he carried his fifty-five years well. He married Félicité Didot, one of the family of printers. She liked him, but she was little more than a child. His manner with her was, it appears, paternal and sentimental, somewhat morose, but that of a good-hearted fellow. He carried on his idyll under the shadow of the Terror, which he had never expected would come to pass. He had two children, a boy, called Paul, and a girl, called Virginie. One consequence of the new regime was the sack of the Royal Gardens, now the National Gardens. Citizens, in exercise of their new liberty, tore up the plants from the beds. Bernardin having given him word of this, the minister called on the citizens at the Faubourg Saint-Marceau to mount guard before the gates "a fraternal guardianship, with fixed bayonets." This armed fraternity restored order in some measure. But the Keepership was suppressed.

In 1793 Bernardin petitioned the Revolutionary Government in the manner at once imperious and humble that was his by nature. He had no very bitter enemies on the Committee. His virtues, of

which he made much mention, his grumbling humour which had already had such success, his white hair, his love of Nature, his denunciation of the Royal monuments, and above all the memory of Jean-Jacques whose friend he had been, all tended to guarantee him from suspicion. Some of the journals likened him to Cato and Aristides. But Bernardin was not devoid of prudence. He distrusted this violent Government and, besides, his nature was gentle, and he had a horror of blood. He took the wise course, and concealed himself in the country, in a house at Essones, which had become his by marriage.

Citizens with pikes caused him anxiety for a time, and would not let him sleep in his own bed because he had no certificate of citizenship. But Bernardin did a clever thing, and with great effect. At a wineshop, opposite his own house, he, the author of the *Études* and of *Paul et Virginie*, set up as public letter-writer, and shaped petitions for the citizens of Essones. This artifice bore the look of the simplicity of old republican days and ways. He was allowed to return to his house; and there he wrote *Les Harmonies*.

Massacre, famine, and the guillotine, had in no way upset his plans for mankind, and he continued to announce the coming of Astræa and the return to Nature.

In 1794 Bernardin was appointed professor of moral science at the École normale, which had recently been founded.

Installed in his professorial chair, "I am," said he, "father of a family, and a country man." Frenzied applause greeted his words. After his first lecture, he withdrew to consider what he

should next say, and mounted his desk no more. The following year the Institute was created, and Bernardin was called on for a course on moral science. He tried to profess his deism, but it became more and more insipid and lachrymose. He was grown old; times had changed; his science, altogether chimerical, seemed to belong to some other age. Lavoisier, Laplace, and Berthollet, had come on the scene.

His young wife, carried off by consumption, left him the most complicated of lawsuits as a legacy. Now a widower, at sixty-three, left with his little four-year-old Virginie, and his Paul of eight months only, there came under his notice in a school for young ladies, whose doors stood open to his virtuous reputation, a pensive young sentimentalist, a Mademoiselle Désirée de Pelleporc, who had learned to love him through his *Paul et Virginie*, all among her little rivals in class. She was eighteen; he married her. This epoch saw him the handsome white-haired veteran, with long curled locks and blue eyes, whom age had left untouched. His wife and his disciples, who loved him to tears, looked on him as already among the immortals. A banker's failure had carried off the little property he had possessed. He drew on his credit for a small house at Eragny, on the bank of the Oise. He planted sumachs of Japan, and wed his red-blossomed begonias to the Normandy apple trees; and there he taught Paul to spell out his *Télémaque*, and indited pages wherein his disciples were fain to read the testament of a sage; he was held in veneration. He believed in and gave others faith in his long familiarity with the God of Fénelon. No great effort of the imagination was necessary

by now to see the flowers springing in the Elysian Fields under the feet of this pure man, and to see him clad with immortal radiance as with a garment. "A light," said Fénelon, "such as is not to be compared with the darkling ray that illumines the eyes of miserable mortals, and which is but darkness; it is rather a celestial glory. . . . It strengthens the sight, and carries to the recesses of the soul a serenity I cannot describe." Such is also the light of a great genius.

Bernardin, for all his love of Nature, never left Paris altogether, but was held there by consideration of his proper glory, and by material affairs, which were not beneath his notice. His windows gave on one of the courts of the Louvre, facing those of Ducis. Old Ducis was overflowing with altruism; his heart was of heroic mould. If Bernardin breathed his soul into his books, Ducis kept his better part for his friends.

Louise and Joseph Bonaparte went to visit the author of the *Études*, and caressed him without stint. General Bonaparte also went to see him, after Marengo, and was careful to leave behind on the mantelpiece a roll of gold louis; he was obliging a colleague, for he also was Member of the Institute. Bernardin refused office under the Empire, but accepted pension. Napoleon he called the "hero philosopher." In an academic discourse he likened the Jacobins to "arctic foxes tearing the bodies of the dead." And, he added: "Heaven at length sends us a deliverer. Even thus doth the eagle swoop through the storm." Bernardin was growing old, and the honey he distilled had no flavour. He did not understand the taste of the day. He was put out when he was not listed

among the Senate, but his strength was failing. His walks abroad were of short duration, and slow, but he still petitioned authority. Now it was for his daughter, who obtained a situation at Ecouen, now for his son, who was given a scholarship at a lycée; both receiving the public education formerly condemned by their parent. He again began to bore people with his unfortunate Theory of Tides, but it was his last delusion. Apoplexy struck him, and returned to strike again. In the early days of November, 1813, he manages to get back to his house in the country. Again he saw the forest of Saint-Germain in its winter nakedness. When he was nearing the end he was carried into his garden and looked on his Bengal rose trees; the leaves were yellow, and about to fall at midday. On January 21st, the earth being covered with snow, the sun smiling through the mist and making its way into the room, Jacques-Henri-Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, surrounded by the family that had come to him late in life, sighed out, "*Mon Dieu!*" and died, in the seventy-seventh year of his age. If we may believe him, he was gone, like Socrates, to visit Phtia the fruitful.

With him departed the wretchedness and the errors of a mind that had but too often quarrelled with life and with men; but he left the world, among his many futile pages, some fair visions that remain untarnished, pictures of pastoral love, and glimpses of that Venus it had been vouchsafed him to descry in the world of nature.

CHATEAUBRIAND

I THE CHILDHOOD OF CHATEAUBRIAND



RANÇOISE-RENÉ DE CHATEAUBRIAND grew up from childhood among heather, fallow land, and fields of buckwheat, in a Breton castle, under the cold eye of his father who lived on there, withered, old, and eaten up with pride and disgust of life.

Combourg raised its towers and pepper-caster turrets above oak woods, by the side of a lake. The cold and melancholy Breton country stretched away on all sides. Neglected by a fretful mother, René's young years passed heavily enough in this sad home amid its wild surroundings. He had a special attachment for his fourth sister, a sickly child, left adrift like himself, and pensive as he was. The brother and sister saw but one face of affection in the feudal mansion, that of an old servant, Villeneuve, who, more their mother than the mother was, clung to the children more than she, and gave them the full devotion of her humble heart. René grew, in silence.

His finely cut head did its work by its inner light, gathering visions, and shaping its dreams. There, in his own corner of the country, under elderly tutors, and much as he pleased, he learnt mathematics, fencing, and Latin. His genius had high outlook, his judgment was harsh, his memory infallible, and he had riches of imagination and was avid of glory.

On leaving college, he returned to Combourg and his precocious melancholy bore him company. His depression was mortal, for, if we may believe his own avowal, one day in the woods he pressed the muzzle of his gun to his forehead.

It was not his faith that withheld him from suicide; he had small religion then, and such as he affected later never entered deeply into his acts or thoughts. He must have had, at the decisive moment, some confused vision, some sudden intuition, of a brilliant destiny. Necessity was that he should live. Moreover, his melancholy had its pleasing side; his desert was an enchanted desert. If there were fires that consumed his youth and loneliness, he could well perfume the flames with every scent of poetry. When he was stretched on the grass, or in his boat, book in hand, lake and shore were peopled with voluptuous images; he could see the heroines of his poetry and romance; particularly could he see Tibullus's Delia, the Sinner of Massillon's sermon, and the immortal and glowing form who, from among the Virgilian myrtles, exercises her enchantments across the ages on the chosen youth of each generation:

"Hic, quos durus amor crudeli tabe peredit
Secreti celant calles et myrtea circum
Silva tegit. . . .
. . . Phœnissa recens a vulnere Dido
Errabat silva in magna: quam Troius heros
Ut primum juxta stetit adgnovitque per umbras
Obscuram, qualem primo qui surgere mense
Aut videt aut vidisse putat per nubila lunam. . . "

Happy are they who thrill to that miracle of poetry! The world knows, perhaps, some thousand such lines. Were they to perish, earth would be less fair.

But life means work, and contemplation must have an end sometimes. Younger sons of families in that province go ordinarily to sea. René was willing at first, then abruptly refused to follow old usage. When he was nineteen he took coach for Paris and fortune. Versailles dazzled his eyes: he felt himself a wild man of the woods; he made his wildness his pose; it was the first affectation of a man who was to adopt all poses. He followed the royal hunt for one day, and was seen at Versailles no more. Three years later, in 1790, something happened to him to make his heart beat faster. An idyll of his composition and carrying his signature, was published in the *Almanach des Muses*. A great experience in youth. The idyll celebrated *L'Onde enchanteresse*, the magic cave. The piece was in the manner of Léonard.

The young poet says:

"To the dark tomb addressed,
My shade unharassed now and unpursued
Among the shady woods shall seek its rest.
In courts of fame my name, unknown, shall fail,
To live 'neath humble roof of reed-thatch drest;
From age to age the shepherds on the crest
Guarding their flocks, shall tell my simple tale:
'Our friend,' so shall they say, 'here had his nest,
Beneath these oaks his birth, his childhood's hours,
Beside this stream the springing grass he pressed,
Upon this plain his tomb, beneath these flowers.'"

Throughout his life he returned to this hankering after obscurity of destiny. While he pressed forward in pursuit of honours, he would sigh for solitude and the world's forgetting. He was sincere in this. Our contradictions are as veritable as our other elements.

In 1787 his eldest brother married the granddaughter of M. de Malesherbes.

Malesherbes wore his honours and his recognized virtues with good humour. He could talk with the learned and the philosophical, and could play with little children. Young René saw much of the old man, and was attached to him, but did not acquire his liberality of mind, his moderation, his simplicity, and all those qualities so natural and proper to man's happiness, which Malesherbes exhibited along with the other philosophical minds of his age. Malesherbes, a great man of his period, was tolerant, and a lover of justice, and respected all men's callings. He was of opinion, with Raynal and Diderot, that a man's service to society was the measure of his worth. He knew the value of travel, and here he had some influence on the course of Chateaubriand's destiny.

M. de Malesherbes, who left the ministry when Turgot died, in 1776, had tramped on foot across France, Holland, and Switzerland, in the manner extolled by his master. "To go a-foot," said Jean-Jacques, "is to travel as Thales did, and Plato, and Pythagoras. I can hardly understand how a philosopher can do otherwise, and voluntarily refuse himself the close acquaintance of the wealth underfoot which earth offers in profusion to our eyes."

M. de Malesherbes, a philosopher, had not done otherwise. But grown older since then, and kept in France in the public interest, and by his work, his course of life, his family, and advancing years, he now made long voyages in his arm-chair: he followed on the map the course of travel taken by Drake, by Bougainville, by Lapérouse. Of

Lapérouse, who had reached Botany Bay in 1788, there was no further news. D'Entrecasteaux had gone in search of him; the public was exercised over the two lost frigates. A young man of M. de Malesherbes' acquaintance, André Chénier, had written these verses, known only to a few friends:

> "I blame the winds, impeach the jealous deep,
> Which Laperouse yet holds, and yet may keep. . . ."

And with his love for long voyages, and with his interest in maritime discovery, with his avidity for the stories of the great navigators, went the lofty notion of seconding whatever might be useful for the common good. Those men, nourished on the Encyclopædia, were assured of the importance of studying our planet thoroughly, over its entire surface, that nothing might remain unknown on it which could be of service to mankind. And new trade routes were to be desired. M. de Malesherbes urged Chateaubriand to visit America. He would be at home to him of a morning, and lean over the map with him, reckon the distance from Behring's Straits to Hudson Bay, and express his fervent wish that a north-west passage should be sought by land from America to the Indies. He ended by inducing his young friend to undertake the adventure. He had not, in truth, great hope in the discoveries of an explorer who was ignorant of botany and knew not the use of binnacle and compass, but he thought that distant travel was a good thing for young men, and judged it seasonable that a young fellow of good family, with a commission in the King's army, should be removed from France on the eve of a revolution which was sure to bring cruel experience to all who were involved in it.

Chateaubriand, in the spring of 1791, embarked from Saint-Malo for Baltimore. He visited some of the towns in North America, and the Canadian Lakes, went a little farther northward, and then returned to France, carrying in his head a confused impression of rivers and savannas, visions vague and grandiose, a forest of fancies wherein his fantastic dreams were cradled in festoons of wild growth. Solitude was not for him. The desert, to afford him pleasure, must provide a crowd to admire him there, even as the faithful swarmed in the Thebaïd round the cells of the hermits. In eight months he had had enough of Yankees and Canadians, and he talked of the Natchez Indians as though he had smoked the peace-pipe in their tents for twenty years. Earth was no longer wide enough to contain his weariness of it. He draped himself in his travelling cloak; but he knew nothing whatever of geography. M. de Malesherbes, who saw things clearly, deemed the voyage a failure. The young man brought him back not so much as the fruit seed of an exotic plant. He was full of promises, swore he would go again and stay for nine years in the new world. They parted company, and saw each other no more. M. de Malesherbes was then approaching the moment when he was to defend before the Convention the life of a King whose intelligence he despised and whose policy he blamed, and when he was to be borne to the scaffold in the course of a revolution whose path he had prepared and whose spirit he had breathed.

René was soon to join the Army of the Princes.

His sister, Lucile, hastened to conclude a *mariage de convenance* for him, and he departed. His travels, at any rate, gave him much to write about. He

made a big manuscript of them, and it contained among other matter an epic in prose, and a short romance. The romance was entitled *Atala;* he had a weakness for it. He put it in the knapsack he bore as gentleman-private, and took it with him to the siege of Thionville. *Atala* was pierced by two bullets at the passage of the Moselle. At that date *Atala* was not as yet ornamented with all the flowers of piety which burdened it when it saw the light of publication. Our volunteer in the Royal Forces had but a small taste for Christianity. As an emigrant he sought England, and dark years followed, years of wretchedness, sickness, and toil, in the course of which he conceived a bitter, violent, and ill-arranged work, of profoundly irreligious tendency, for such indeed is his *Essai sur les révolutions*. The first volume was through the Press when he had news of the death of his mother and of one of his sisters. On these tidings he suddenly turned Christian. "I wept," he said, "and I believed." Faith deals these sudden strokes, as we know; its action is unforeseen and falls like the thunder-stroke. But faith did not destroy the old Adam in M. de Chateaubriand; it acted with benignancy, and left him still his fancies fair and profane, his despair impious but brilliant, and the myrtle-encircled shades that peopled his thought:

> "*Secreti celant calles et myrtea circum*
> *Silva tegit.*"

He conceived an Apology for the Christian Faith, all pomp and circumstance, and wrote his *Génie du Christianisme*, a work not on a par with his *Essai sur les révolutions*. But the book came at the

right moment, when the Concordat was effected, and French society reconciled with the Church.

Irreligion, which had been all the fashion twenty years earlier among the aristocracy of the salons, had become hateful as being Jacobin and revolutionary. The *sans-culottes* had made it unfashionable for long to come. The society of the Empire, already forming under the Consulate, wanted a cult of some sort, and found in the ritual of religion an aristocratic odour, a Court perfume; and its women went to Mass with great gusto. And the younger generation softened in equal measure. Sanctuaries, despoiled and long left empty, had the attraction of ruins. The taste for the Gothic was born. It is so natural to feel regret for vanished things. Youth and sentiment, wherever manifest, did as Chateaubriand did; wept and believed.

The success of the *Génie du Christianisme* was prodigious. The story of *Atala* was not out of place in this volume of pleasing piety. It was published separately in 1801 in the *Mercure de France*. Old Malesherbes, now lying with the victims of the scaffold in their bed of quicklime in the Madeleine cemetery, had little thought that his young relative was going to bring back from Canada a Catholic romance.

Atala would certainly have displeased him, both in matter and style. "The Savoyard Vicar," he would have said, "speaks more naturally and with better philosophy than does your Père Aubry, who is no better than a fanatic." That is much what the philosophical world said about *Atala*. But they were of another age. The revolution was of their making, and that was enough; and too much. They had outlived their work, and themselves.

On Chateaubriand's side were the women, whose tears were his, and the younger men, whom he enchanted by the magic of his astonishing style, by his brilliant and captivating imagination. From the outset he exhibited the disordered beauties, the shining faults, the headstrong vagaries which draw admirers and followers in crowds.

Atala was the fruit of his hasty visit to North America, but the story of *René* dates from the Château de Combourg. *René* found place, by a daring device, in the *Génie du Christianisme*. The author afterwards detached it thence. The René of the romance was René de Chateaubriand; even the name is unchanged. Rene had so long seen himself mirrored in the lake by the old house! None can paint Narcissus as Narcissus can. And if Rene sketched, alongside his own portrait, the portrait of a sister for us to love, we may believe that he drew her as he saw her, vaguely, and in the light of an egoism tender but cruel, and not such as she was.

The key to Rene's character, to its ennui and its shadows, to his nights full of trouble whether he waked or dreamed, is lack of love in the soul which demands love from all the world, but is too cold to bestow it on any. Genius is ever young. The youth of such a man as Chateaubriand lasts nearly all his life. But we will let the date of the *dernier Abencerage* mark a halt. Rene, when over forty, visited the East in search of inspiration, and renown. He came back by Granada and the Alhambra. He was borne company by a woman he loved, and, like Abou-Hamet, he inscribed their two names on the wall of the Room of the Two Sisters. He himself has lifted a corner of the veil

from this secret. The beautiful woman who had been an inspiration to the great writer died mad and desolate. As for him, his path across his generation was a trail of glory, and he stood as a demi-god at the birth of ours; but never, they say, could he ease his breast of that ennui that preys on the empty heart.

II. LUCILE

She came into this world at Saint-Malo, in the dirty narrow Rue des Juifs, on a gloomy day in the year 1764, and she was not welcomed. The son that was looked for was born four years later. He was René.

Lucile grew up in freedom, in the salt airs. Madame de Chateaubriand took little concern for her daughters, and Lucile was left to herself. She was over tall for her age, and weakly, and her neck was held up by an iron collar covered in brown velvet, and she wore her elders' cast-off clothes. Her pointed corsets lacerated her skin. This strictness of dress was her only distinction of birth. Her hair, dragged high on the head and crowned with a cap, completed an appearance of lamentable plainness. Villeneuve, an old servant of the household, had care of her.

Every morning she and her brother René were led off to the Demoiselles Coupart, two hunchbacked sisters who taught children their letters. They were not clever at reading, they were scolded, and read worse than ever. Meanwhile M. le Comte de Combourg was gaining prizes at the college of Saint-Brieuc. Lucile and René were overburdened, and became stupefied. But for all that, they were

children. They would escape, and run on the beach; the pillars of an old-time gallows served them for playing Puss-in-the-Corner. This characteristic incident comes from Chateaubriand, along with the others I may quote, and reveals an imagination that sought the terrible in romance. M. le Chevalier mostly played the truant on the shore with all the young rascals of the town. He would return hatless and in rags. Of an evening Lucile and Villeneuve would stitch his torn trousers and vest, but René would get his whipping next day for all she could do. She fell into that mood of discouragement that children know when everything goes wrong, for want of a mother's smile in their life. Her suppressed affection was all given to the clever untutored brother who suffered as she did from a cruelty of neglect. René protected his sister, fought tooth and nail with any who struck her; and Lucile cherished her brave little champion, and knew, through her affection for him, all the trouble and the burden of a faithful love.

In the Château de Combourg where she was brought up, Lucile led a life of steady monotony. She breakfasted in her own room, dined on the stroke of midday, in the large hall where M. de Chateaubriand would sit, more silent and more chill than the very walls; there they sat, in his presence, according to observance, until two o'clock. Then, shut in her room, she had change of solitude. In summer, after eight o'clock supper, she would look out on the skies and the woods, by her brother's side, while M. de Chateaubriand was after the owls with his gun. And in winter she would crouch by the fire with the young Chevalier, while her mother lay groaning on a couch. The master of the house

patrolled the hall from end to end, with equal step, a dry stick of a man, a phantom in a dressing-gown of white ratteen. Now fading into the recessed dark, now growing again towards the firelight, his glacial apparition at each approach froze the whispers on their young lips. On the stroke of ten he took his silver candlestick, stooped his dry cheek for their salute, and ascended his tower stairs. Then Lucile would come to life, and chatter at her ease with René; then she, too, would retire for the night, trembling, a prey to undefined terrors.

Martins says Duncan* the King, breed only where the air is delicate, and, in summer, the martins sought the crevices of Combourg's walls. Lucile grew tall and good to look at with her even pallor and dark tresses. But, according to her brother, her beauty was above all that of expression. Her eyes, which could languish or show fire, seemed to pursue the unknown, or would weep, affrighted by the visions of her own fancy. Chateaubriand says in his Memoirs that she would have fits of piety, and be absorbed in books of devotion, sigh for the shade and peace of the nun's cloister. At nightfall she would go and pray at the foot of a crucifix that stood under a poplar at the fork of the road.

Her nerves broke down; she had hallucinations. There was a breath of madness in her at times, of a strange and quiet kind. She would sit by herself and watch, lamp in hand, on the tower stairs, for the clock-hands to come together at midnight, and then she would become aware of things heard far off, and utterings of dying victims. René, from whom we learn all this, does all he can to make us

* Banquo—not Duncan.

believe that he alone was the cause of her trouble, and that this so adorable sister was, even as Phèdre, *malgré soi incestueuse*. How can we refuse to recognize Lucile in the *Amélie* of his *René?* The old castle of Combourg must rest guardian of the secret.

When Lucile was twenty years of age her solitude became complete. The Chevalier, who had declared his unwillingness to enter the navy, packed his portmanteau and sought his fortune in Paris. That was in 1786; autumn was coming on, and on September 6th, just as the bell sounded the hour for the evening meal, M. de Chateaubriand was struck down with apoplexy. His death was in character, for he died abruptly, and there was no sadness of farewell. His body was interred in the crypt of the church of Combourg.

Lucile, who became a canoness in the Angoulême Chapter, was desirous of being transferred to the Chapter of Remiremont. These lay canonries were, in some sort, portions for the younger daughters of noble families. Remiremont, *Romarici mons*, an abbey in the diocese of Toul, in Lorraine, traced its foundation to St. Romaric in the year 620. The ladies of Remiremont, to the number of seventy-two, were religious up to the close of the seventeenth century, and were then secularized. In order that their prebends might not fail, they were in the habit of presenting young girls of good birth who became their adoptive nieces. These nieces took the place of their spiritual aunts when these died or married. Only the Abbess was vowed to celibacy. To enter the Chapter was a difficult matter. Lucile, pending her translation, remained at Combourg. Her sisters were living on the estates of the

families they had married into, at Fougères, but the third, Julie, who had become Madame de Farcy, and who hated Brittany, betook herself to Paris, where she could display the charm of her intelligence and the beauty of her shoulders. She took Lucile with her, and René, who had come back to Combourg on his father's death, accompanied them. At Paris, the two sisters lived together amicably; they were quite unlike each other. Madame de Farcy, animated and fond of society, made herself a circle in the literary world. Delisle de Salles, Ginguené, Parny, Chamfort, would visit her salon. Lucile made a conquest of Chamfort for a season.

A venerable figure dominated this society in virtue of his age and name, M. de Malesherbes, who had married his granddaughter to Lucile's elder brother. A good man and a learned, he exhibited himself in the light of a father to them all, a majestic and touching figure such as Greuze or Diderot created, but of a nobler bearing and less rude simplicity.

Madame de Farcy fell ill and was taken with piety. She cried out in the novelty of her devotion:

"What shall I say to God when He demands an account of my life? Verse is all I know!"

Julie knew that of Léonard and of Parny, and also the more melancholy verse of the English group. There was then a great liking for English gardens, and for the poetry of the Lake school, and its misty atmosphere. She translated a few pages of Thomson's Seasons. Lucile's own hand secretly sought paper and ink, and she wrote prettily enough.

In all this dazzling society she preserved her native timidity, her sadness, and her rather shy and wilful humour. Nevertheless, she was induced to

play a part in a little piece composed for M. de Malesherbes' birthday: some pretty pastoral, no doubt, adorned with the tender grace of the period. A sip of champagne was pressed upon her, and gave her heart: she touched her audience and the old gentleman was ravished, and interested himself in her and on her behalf, and used his credit to obtain her entry into the Chapter of Remiremont. Remiremont exacted proof of sixteen quarterings, and much parchment had to be rummaged, and an adoptive aunt found for her among the lady canonesses. The old regime was crumbling at the very moment when they were thus bestiring themselves about a canonry. We never know what we are in pursuit of, and we seek after shadows.

Every one proclaimed the coming revolution. "The Golden Age is coming once more," people said, "and we shall return to Nature. Fanaticism is at its last gasp. Henceforth we shall know the reign of tolerance, humanity, and universal peace. Let old-time virtues be re-established, and our laws be the laws of Minos."

In the heart of Normandy, in the green seclusion of Marigny, where Madame de Farcy sought quiet, Lucile came to know the news; the sack of the Maison Reveillon, the opening of the States-General, the oath of the Tennis Court, and the first doings of the Great Assembly. She returned to Paris with the family in the spring of 1789. Their impatience, or their sense of duty brought them all back to the troubles of the town.

They took up their residence in a furnished house in the Rue de Richelieu, near the Palais-Royal. There were no more carriages seen in town; stop was put to them as being aristocratic; only public

vehicles might use the roads. And everywhere one saw lines of people waiting at the barred doors of the bakehouses; bread was lacking. On July 14th, Lucile was at the window, with Madame de Farcy, René, and some friends from Brittany, when they saw a howling ragged crowd coming from the end of the street. They leaned out to see better; they tried to make out what it was that crowned the pikes which rose above the level of the mob. Of a sudden they recognized two human heads. They were the heads of Berthier and Foulon. Lucile fell back senseless.

The Breton family left the Rue Richelieu and took the little town house of Vilette, in the cul-de-sac Féron, in the shadow of the towers of Saint Sulpice.

The Chevalier de Chateaubriand took a bad turn about this time. One of his friends, the Chevalier de Châtenet, was a suitor for Lucile's hand. The Chevalier wrote to him on the subject in the tone of a Lovelace or a Valmont, and in a style that recalled *Angola* rather than René: "Be gentle with her, my dear Châtenet, should you seduce her; she is a maiden, remember." Don Juan also shows two faces and speaks with two tongues.

The Chevalier was married in March, played away his little all in a low gaming-house, and went off to Coblentz to sport the blue coat, red waistcoat, yellow knee-breeches, and fleur-de-lis buttons of those who enlisted in the Royalist armies. The prisons were full to overflowing. Increasing anxiety, and crisis after crisis of terror, shook Lucile's health. In September, when they had the news of the prison-massacres, she relapsed into the nervous condition whose first symptoms had shown

themselves at Combourg. She saw signs in the sky, heard voices. Those about her believed her presentiments were sure, and that she prophesied the ills that occurred. In virtue of the law of suspects, voted September 17th, 1793, three hundred thousand persons were incarcerated. Every relative of an *émigré* was suspect; suspect was every individual who had not his card of citizenship. Lucile had to go into hiding. Madame Ginguené gave her shelter. The women's courage was wonderful. "It was the women who hid the men for the most part." But no retreat was safe, Spies betrayed, and domiciliary visits never ceased. Every time the knocker sounded on the street-door. it evoked transports of fright. The neighbourhood of the cul-de-sac Férou, the streets known as the Rues Cassette, de Vaugirard, des Fossoyeurs, and des Aveugles, occupied by ecclesiastics, were more particularly looked into; they were always in trouble and under suspicion. The municipal guards would visit the roofs, the attics, the gutters, the chimneys—they broke open desks, and thrust their bayonets through the mattresses. Then they would desist for a while, kindly accept a glass of wine, and talk good-humouredly. Some of them could not read, and looked on any written paper as compromising matter.

It was difficult to get away; the city-gates were guarded, and the river. But Lucile found means to leave Paris, and gained Brittany. She entered a convent at Rennes, with her sister-in-law. There had been massacres in the district, and the terror was among them. Lucile showed a sister's devotion to the young wife. At Paris, M. de Malesherbes, Madame la Présidente de Rosambeau, her daughter,

Madame la Comtesse de Chateaubriand, her granddaughter, and the Comte de Chateaubriand, her grandson by marriage, were all guillotined, on the same day and on the one scaffold. Lucile's aged mother was dragged from farthest Brittany to a Paris prison, Lucile thrown, along with young Madame de Chateaubriand, into a dungeon at Rennes. The 9th Thermidor came, and saved them.

The 15th Thermidor, year Four (August 2nd, 1796), Lucile married, before the civil authorities of Rennes, Monsieur Caud, or de Caud, formerly parliamentary advocate in Brittany, later of the King's Guard, and, at the time, a captain in the auxiliary National Guard. He was sixty-nine years of age, at least, and it was but a refuge which the old man offered to the hapless girl. Their union knew no length of days; Madame de Caud was a widow by January 15th, 1797, and soon afterwards lost her mother, and her sister Julie.

Alone, and with none to lean on, she returned to the society of her brother who, back in France, and removed from the list of *émigrés*, had published the *Génie du Christianisme*. He had become a celebrity and could make his influence felt. Lucile in the salon in the Rue Neuve-du-Luxembourg, met the choice spirits of the day, and formed friendships of value with M. Joubert, and Madame Pauline de Beaumont. Madame de Beaumont was a wisp of a woman, a mere zephyr breathing of love: M. Joubert likened her to "some painted figure from Herculaneum, stealing noiseless on the air, scarcely an embodied thing."

In the Chateaubriand circle all had nicknames. Madame de Beaumont was the Swallow, M. de

Fontanes was the Boar, a hog of Epicurus, Madame de Vintimille Bad-Heart, young Guéneau de Mussy the little Crow—this to distinguish him from René, who was the Big Crow. There was yet another Crow, Monsieur de Chênedollé. Lucile met him for the first time in the autumn of 1802. Charles-Julien Lioult de Chênedollé was born at Vire on November 4th, 1769, of a family of lawyers. His mother was of a fanciful disposition, "resourceful in self-torture, one of those natures whose lives are all anguish and terror." He took after her. When he was nine he welcomed the sunshine on the fields, and then found he could look on them with pleasure. At twelve, he was sent to the Oratorians at Juilly.

On coming back to Vire once more, in 1789, his was a life of enchantment. A harmony seemed to reign between the skies of Normandy, whose beauty has at certain hours almost an understanding, and this young spirit, itself as fresh as the country-side. Stretched on the grass he would read the *Nouvelle Héloïse* and Gessner's Idylls. The revolution snatched him from his cornfields and his reading. Like René, he went to serve in the Royalist Army. The Army of the Republic drove him to the frozen seas of Holland along with his disbanded companions in arms. He remained quietly in Hamburg, whither he had betaken himself, and where the more serious elements of the old regime were gathered and talked in the old way. Rivarol was firing off his last squibs. Chênedollé was lost in wonderment. He admired M. de Lally, who, escaped from the Revolution, would remark at the supper-table: "I saw that head fall—kindly give me a wing of chicken."

At Hamburg he knew, too, the poet Klopstock,

who had opened wide vistas to the imagination, but on a world of mists. He himself contributed some odes in his own style to the *Spectateur du Nord*, but kept his modesty and his melancholy turn: he was sicklied o'er with the cast of Obermann's thought. Back in France again, he meditated an epic poem on the genius of man; but he was in no hurry for anything, and waited, and waited patiently, for a place in the diplomatic service, or for employment for his pen.

Chênedollé met Lucile and loved her. It was a deep-seated sympathy, and pure affection, touched with sadness. Lucile, older than he, was moved by it. But she did not love him. She refused to marry him, but she gave him her promise that she would never marry any other. The idea of sacrifice had worked upon her at once, and her heart aspired to dreams that would never have been satisfied with an ordinary and smooth-running course of love.

"I am not thinking of my own happiness," she told him. "The undertaking I give you, to remain unmarried, has a charm for me, because I feel it almost as a bond between us, as though I should in a way belong to you."

In the summer she went away to Saint-Aubin-du-Cormier, four leagues from Fougère, on the Rennes road. There she stopped with Madame de Chateaubourg, her elder sister. She had nowhere else to lay her head; she was as poor as anyone could be. But it took little to make her happy. She was as pleased as a child when they gave her a little garden at Lascardais for her own, where she could read and dream without being overlooked.

No sooner was she away from Chênedollé than she wanted to see him; she appealed to him in

distress. He was not to come openly; she dreaded being teased by Madame de Chateaubriand. He came and she said to him:

"Monsieur de Chênedollé, you are sure you are not deceiving me? You really love me?" She continued with animation: "Do not think for a moment that I am going to marry you. I would never seek my own happiness at the expense of yours."

But those two noble minds no doubt quickly found words of consolation and generous in sentiment. He said resignedly: "It will always be a joy to me that for one moment in my life I have been by your side: it is as though I had brushed lightly against a beautiful flower, something of whose perfume remained with me when I passed on my way."

Followed a fresh rush of feeling, and fresh implorations. Lucile gave way. He obtained of her this parting word: "I do not say no."

He went back to his own beautiful garden at Vire, accompanied by his hopes and his fears, and from there he exercised an anxious sovereignty over this so charming and wayward soul. His letters exhibited his ardent worship, his delicate jealousy. He would have it that the little tales that Lucile wrote so pleasingly should be for his eye alone, and that they should not be brutally exposed to the vulgar in any public page, as they had been when *l'Arbre sensible* and *l'Origine de la Rose* appeared in the *Mercure*. Lucile replied to his letters at first and then, of a sudden, stopped writing altogether. What was it that happened? Probably we shall never know. And Chênedollé, impatient and sorrow-stricken, wandered from Vire to Paris and

back to Vire again. Madame de Beaumont christened him the Bear of Bears. Did he go near a window his friends would say: "He is going to throw himself out." At length he rushed off to Rennes, where she was. Thus followed up, she complained to her brother, on a harsh note that surprises one, of what she calls M. de Chênedollé's impertinences. It was a ruse, for she had smiled on his coming. She had feared that he might be lost to her. It was at night. She had seen him off from the landing on the staircase, and had leant, lamp in hand, over the balustrade, and watched him go, with an unforgettable look of grief, and regret, and fear. And he, distressed, going out into the dark street under the heavy rain, had a presentiment that he should see her no more.

Lucile wrote on October 4th to her brother, then Secretary to the French legation at Rome:

"My affection for you is very natural; since the days of our childhood you have been my protector and my friend; you have never cost me a tear, and never have you made a friend but he became mine. . . ."

Grief came upon her unawares again at Rennes. She learnt the death of a friend. Madame de Beaumont, consumed by a hectic fever, had written from Mont-Dore to M. Joubert: "I am coughing less, but I think it only means a noiseless departure." She breathed her last at Rome. This grief helped to unsettle Lucile's mind. She could not believe her friend dead; her wild imagination invented an abduction, saw her carried off, or a disappearance. In her own case she saw persecution. Dark forebodings weighed on her.

She set down her thoughts in writing, only to

throw them into the fire. She would read Fénelon and copy what was to her liking, and one day it was this:

"Very soon we shall find again what we have lost. Every day brings us nearer with long strides. A very little farther and there will be no call for tears, we it is who die; what we love lives, and will live on."

With the restlessness of the sick, she left Rennes and Fougères for Paris in the autumn of 1804. She would have liked to be with René, but she had hurt Madame de Chateaubriand in many ways, and particularly by her seeming approval of René's intimacy with Madame de Beaumont. Chateaubriand lent his sister a lodging in the Rue Caumartin, which she did not care to accept. She went to live with the Ladies of Saint-Michel in the Rue Faubourg Saint-Jacques. Madame de Navarre, the Superior, gave her a cell looking out on the garden where the nuns walked for exercise between the vegetable beds.

In the long days of retreat she would cry a hundred times: "Lord, hear my prayer, for the spirit fails me!"

She wrote her brother a despairing letter: "My life," she said, "emits its last ray." She recalled the years of their childhood, of their early youth, and that with a secret fear that it should be she alone who remembered them so keenly.

He came to see her, and found her walking in the garden with Madame de Navarre. She went upstairs to talk with him. He was alarmed; it was an effort to her to pull herself together, and order her thoughts; at intervals there was a convulsive movement of her lips.

"I think the convent is bad for me," she said, and she talked of taking some out-of-the-way lodging near the Jardin des Plantes. It was the last whim of a sick woman.

She received one more visit from René, who was leaving for Vichy with his wife. She saw him to the stairs, and watched him go down while he said, "Adieu, dear sister; take all care of yourself. Write to me. Next winter I hope that you will live with us."

But they both knew that it was impossible. And it was no longer granted to Lucile to make plans for so far ahead. She died three months later, on November 9th, 1804, in her forty-first year, without presence of relations or friends, but only a waiting-maid, and St. Germain, the eighty-year-old servant of Madame de Beaumont. Her brother was far from Paris. It was his money that had supported her in her last days. She had a pauper's funeral and was laid in the common burial ground.

When Chênedollé heard of her end, it raised a suspicion in his mind that made his grief the more dreadful. For he entertained the notion that Lucile's death had not been unsought. We may suppose then that he did not believe in her religious sentiments. He knew her. As for me, after having raked together practically all that is known to-day of this woman, who may almost be called celebrated, I must declare myself utterly incapable of defining a single trait of her character. To me, I must acknowledge, she remains utterly unknown.

XAVIER DE MAISTRE



ORN at Chambéry in 1764, Xavier de Maistre was son of the President of the Savoy Senate, and brother, as we know, to the young senator who was looked on from the start as the glory of his family. The younger son of a good house, his sole provision his sword and his pencil, he did his service in the Sardinian army, and drew landscapes in his hours of leisure.

I should imagine that his landscapes were imbued with sentiment, and delicate in handling, rather than striking in effect; and low in tone like the lakes and mountains they reproduced. Such as they were, amateurs of painting made much of them.

The Savoyards are an honest, faithful, and industrious people, good soldiers, and given to the study of the natural curiosities in which their native soil abounds.

Xavier de Maistre was a true Savoyard: he loved his mountains, was faithful to his King, and busied himself with chemistry. He was wanting in the magnificent obstinacy, the strong but narrow genius, the blind force not to be turned aside, which set Comte Joseph at war with his whole age; but he was gentle of manners, and of a happy turn of mind, and his understanding was wide, quick, and adaptable.

He was given to reading, an occupation not much

in usage among young men of the military profession. When he was twenty-six or twenty-seven, and was in garrison at Alexandrie de la Paille with the marines, he had an affair of honour which resulted in his being put under arrest for forty-two days. In his place, how his comrades would have yawned and drunk and smoked. Xavier found other resources against loneliness. He revolved a thousand matters in his head, at random, and wrote down his reflections. Descartes, when he was serving under Maurice de Nassau, used the same means, but with all gravity, to fill his empty days as a soldier. "Happily," he says, "having no cares or passions to trouble me, I shut myself in all day with the stove, and had every leisure to amuse myself with my own thoughts."

Xavier de Maistre, who likewise, it appears, had no cares or passions, set to work to write his *Voyage autour de ma chambre* (a Journey round my Room). The theme was happy, and lent itself to anything and everything.

He wrote some chapters of it during his days of arrest. The remainder came later, and at leisure, and the whole manuscript was put away in a drawer, for Xavier was not a writer by profession: he had had no thought of making a book for publication; it was modest, and the notion of being printed, sold in bookshops, and read in literary circles would certainly have startled him. But it does not follow that he had a mean opinion of what he had written.

In 1793, visiting his brother Comte Joseph, at Lausanne, he gave him his manuscript to read. Joseph, who liked it, had it printed the following year at Turin.

The French Revolution was already a thing of the

past in 1794; the young soldier's book was new, was of the present, and made talk. It was short, and it was read, and it was greatly appreciated. "It might be Sterne," was the general exclamation.

Yes, perhaps, but a rather over-innocent Sterne. Even a bee must have its sting. It must be said that Xavier de Maistre is too sagacious. Never to be in the wrong is a wrong in itself. And that failing he has. One wishes that he went more deeply into things. He touches on many matters, but goes deeply into nothing.

The tone of the *Voyage autour de ma chambre* passes from the playful to the mildly melancholy, but never touches extremes, and this is why the little volume is pleasing to so many. Speaking for myself, what makes it an agreeable book to me is that, reading it, one gains the intimacy of a man of feeling, and on every page learns to know more of one who has a kindly vision and a modest soul. I do not care greatly for the writer's humorous metaphysic: his fanciful creation of *l'ame et la bête* is insipid after the more seasoned mockery of our eighteenth-century philosophers. But I am sensible of the delicacy of his wit, and of his candour of spirit.

Xavier de Maistre has no overlay of affectation. He is true with himself, and true with others. He is an indulgent master to the good Joanetti, a faithful friend to poor fat Rosine growing old on her cushions, and the discreet admirer of the imaginary Lady of Hautcastel.

He has the gift of pathos in the right place. He can be gay through his tears. And this tearful smile is not unpleasing on the face of the little Muse of Chambéry.

Shortly after the taking of Turin by the Austro-Russian Armies, and before he quitted the town, Xavier de Maistre wrote *l'Expédition nocturne autour de ma chambre* (a Turn round my room at Night). This second small production, briefer than the first, is not less delicate or less pleasing. It goes on firmer feet, perhaps, and shows more maturity of thought. It is rare that a work should have a sequel and not suffer from it.

BENJAMIN CONSTANT



HE romance of *Adolphe* was first published in 1815, in London, where Benjamin Constant had found refuge after the Hundred Days. The celebrity of the author, his standing as a man of fashion, the fame of his doings in society, were bound to awake keen curiosity about a work which was already regarded as an autobiography.

Here is what Sismondi wrote about it, from Italy, to the Countess of Albany:

"There is no book that I want to see so much as this romance of M. de Constant's. I heard it spoken of a long while ago, more than two years, even before he thought of printing it. And though he gave readings of it to half Paris, and we were much in the same society, and though I was much and sincerely attached to him, I was never present at any one of his readings. I have reason to believe that there are many portraits whose originals I have met, and that he did not care to have me there as a witness ready to give evidence as to their likeness."

It is probable that Sismondi was right, and that Benjamin Constant was indeed nervous of admitting among his audience a friend who knew too much of his intimate life. A second letter of Sismondi's to the Countess of Albany, moreover, justifies the misgivings he may have raised, for it contains all

the disclosures that were doubtless to be apprehended from him.

"I have profited by the delay to read *Adolphe* twice over; you will think this overmuch for a work you attach little importance to, and wherein, indeed, one does not feel a very lively interest in any of the personages. But his analysis of every sentiment of the human heart is so admirable, there is so much truth in the hero's weakness, such insight in his observations, such purity and vigour in the style, that the book gives infinite pleasure in the reading. I am the more sensible of it, I well believe, because I recognize the writer in every page, and never did a confession present a more striking likeness to my eyes. He explains all his faults, but he does not excuse them, and he seems to have had no thought of making them amiable. It is quite possible that he was, at an earlier day, more capable of real love than he shows himself in his book; but, when I knew him, he was what Adolphe is, and, with just as little of love in his composition; not less tempestuous, not less given first to soothe and then from some notion of kindness to deceive afresh the woman whose heart he had rent asunder. He has obviously wished to remove all resemblance from the portrait of Ellénore. He has changed the land of her birth, altered everything connected with her country, position, appearance, mental attributes. The details of her life and person are in no way to be identified; and the result is that she occasionally displays, as the story proceeds, characteristics quite different from what we had been led to expect; but her impetuosity and her tyranny in matters of love place her identity beyond all doubt. That seeming intimacy, that domination of passion, in

the course of which they rend each other with every harsh word that anger and hate can dictate, is the history of both of them.

"This resemblance is of itself too striking not to render all other disguise futile.

"The author has not the same reasons for masking his secondary characters. So we may put names to them as we go. His father was just such as he has depicted him. The woman of advanced years with whom he lived in his youth, whom he loved much and whose death he witnessed, was a Madame de Charrières, author of some pretty novels. The officious friend who, while pretending to reconcile him with Ellénore, made matters worse, is Madame Récamier. The Comte de P—— is a pure invention, and, in fact, although he seems at first sight an important personage, the author has not troubled himself to give him features, and gives him no part to play."

Other contemporaries, all the same, are less positive than Sismondi, and some, from whom M. de Loménie subsequently took his cue, thought they recognized, in Ellénore, a certain Madame Lindsay with whom Benjamin Constant, in his early days, had had a brief love-affair.

"She was," says Chateaubriand, "of Irish origin, narrow-minded, rather abrupt in manner, with an elegant figure and pleasing face; she had nobility and loftiness of character; *émigrés* of standing liked to pass their evenings with her, the last of the Ninons." It is very possible that certain traits were borrowed from this character, which, however, is rather blurred in our eyes: but the drama unfolded for us in *Adolphe* never, certainly, had her for heroine. A woman so stormy-natured

and so prone to be carried away by passion, so incapable of resignation, as she is drawn for us, could never have been a free agent whose unconventional life called for a less imperious attitude. And, if any reproach attaches to so perfect a work of romance, it seems to us that it is precisely here that fault may be found.

Ellénore, who exhibits herself as gentle, and reserved, and careful of what is thought of her, soon throws aside everything which lends its modest attraction to her character. There is a want of unity between the woman of discretion who figures at the opening of the book and the loud-mouthed victim whose despair overruns all bounds to end only in her death.

We may see where, at a given moment, when the situation becomes acute, the truth breaks its way through the fiction which should contain and hide it. Behind the rather clouded and indistinct mask of Ellénore, we divine a face we know, distinct of feature, round which floats a memory of joys all too short, and lasting disillusions. The first vision, that of a mistress resigned, and touching in her appeal, vanishes altogether before that other whom we see quivering with rage, armed with the Fury's torch, and vengefully pursuing the man who loves her no more.

It is now nearly a century since *Adolphe* appeared, and changing generations in succession have scarcely altered in attitude towards this singular work. The book has retained their admiration; its hero has always been visited with every severity of criticism. For a hundred years Adolphe's hardness of heart, his unfeelingness, his ingratitude, as contrasted with the devotion of the incomparable Ellénore,

have never ceased to raise indignation in noble hearts. How comes it then, as we re-read this tale of love, we are filled with profound pity for this alleged butcher of hearts, and that he should seem to us to be the most pitiable of victims? Can it be that we are inspired by some perverse illusion, or that there has been some strange misconception of a character whose lively sensibility and endless scruples put him at the mercy of an imperious and passionately selfish woman? Poor, poor Adolphe, who threw away his life and youth and peace of mind as so many morsels for an insatiable mistress to devour! She loves him, no doubt, but with what a ferocious, implacable, and unendurable love. How little resignation, how little shame or discretion, how little of the pride "which fears to be importunate" in this faded heroine, who forces herself on him, obstinate and furious, unwitting that love has wings, and will not go down on its knees to recite a lesson it no longer heeds. In the *Journal* of Benjamin Constant there is a passage in Alexandrine verse on the claims of lawyers, which reads like a commentary on Ellénore's plaints.

How remote is all this from the eighteenth century, and its pleasant ways, its lightness of touch, its elegance and its scepticism! And the elders of the period, who had read *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* in their youth, under the old regime must they not, after all, have remembered that Valmont, who was a gentleman, said to his mistress whom he no longer loved "one wearies of all things, my angel." And the angel had to resign herself, and find consolation, or, if consolation was not to be found, must go and die quietly, in a corner, as did the Presidente. There is no question

but those folk could bear themselves with courage, put a good face on things, and preserve the decencies; they did not deafen a whole generation with their cries and groans. They were frivolous and libertine, but they were no cowards. But Werther's pistol founded a new school, and love became a matter for tragedy, and death must needs result, and with noise.

After having made the wretched Adolphe drink the cup of bitterness and humiliation to the dregs, Ellénore decided to die, in order to endow him with eternal remorse. Benjamin Constant, who was a brave man, has done the thing handsomely; he has sacrificed himself, and left the limelight to his heroine. But sometimes his impatience, and his resentment, have been too strong for him: they keep revealing themselves. For in this troublous soul, swept by many a parching breath, and where no fruit would ripen more, lived one virtue still—sincerity. This man, whom the wretchedness of his life led into unceasing deception, never deceives himself. He passes judgment on himself without weakness or mercy, nor does he display any of that complacent self-pity that is so much the fashion nowadays. He tells us his faults, and that without fatuousness: he does not present his case as unique, his sufferings as anything extraordinary or beautiful, his lapses from virtue as psychological rarities for the enjoyment of lovers of such matters. He is very simple, and very severe on himself; and therefore one is tempted to be indulgent to him. Yes, doubtless, Adolphe's was a weak soul, eager to grasp at happiness, unable to keep it. An ardent but sterile soul, whose visions withered as soon as seen. Obstacles increased and sharpened his desire;

attainment left him lassitude and disgust. But his chief victim was ever himself, and the cold cruelty of the libertine was never his, nor the still crueller indifference of the lover whose dream is fled. He is filled with anguish, he is racked with remorse, and the grief of the woman he loves no longer vibrates in him and puts him to torture.

We repeat: this lover whose heart is dead within him, this unhappy prisoner standing amid a love laid in ashes, appears to us a very martyr to his compassion and patience, and our undivided pity is for him and not for the tyrannical figure that stifles and oppresses him.

"The feelings of man are confused and diverse; they are made up of a multitude of varied observations which escape analysis, and words, always too gross in expression and too general in meaning, may serve to name them, but never to define." So Adolphe says, and certainly no soul, in its shifts and contusion, seems more calculated than his to disconcert the observer. Its every trait seems passing and contradictory, and on the wing. Passion breaks forth, but calculation is at its side. After writing "Woe to the man who in the first moment when love takes him does not believe the attachment eternal!" he adds three pages further on, "I felt that our union could not endure for ever." And when he counsels prudence to his mistress, the advice is already born of his ennui.

Still, the soul that is the theatre of such diverse conflicting sentiments is watched by a mind that is sagacious, and penetrating, and not to be bought off. In this distracted and murky soul, the mind remains intact; and it would seem as though a double spirit were struggling in the man; that,

standing where the centuries meet, he is subjected to their contrary currents; that he keeps a scepticism beneath his passion, and can never be sincerely moved, nor coldly sceptical.

Here perhaps is a revealing passage:

"I had picked up, in my father's house, an immoral way of looking on women. My father, although he kept strictly within the rules of domestic virtue, often indulged in light talk on the que tion of temporary relations in love; they were, in his eyes, if not permissible amusements, at least excusable." And again: "Women, so long as it was not a question of marriage, might, he thought, be enjoyed and then dropped."

Imagine, then, a young man nourished on such maxims, eaten with unbelief at an age when most have still their faith, and then thrown into the burning and storm-laden atmosphere of the nineteenth century. Yes, he knew more ardour than strength, more enthusiasm than steadiness; every motive that may exalt and transport was joined, in him, to a clear vision that froze the rush of sentiment, and this, maybe, is half the secret of Adolphe's soul, as troublous a soul as ever existed.

Such a nature is too complex to be embraced in any one formula, too supple and too shifting to take an exact outline, too agitated always to be consistent.

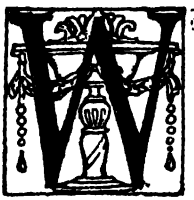
"Whoso could read my heart, when she was absent," Adolphe writes, "would have taken me for a cold and unfeeling seducer; whoso could have seen me at her side would have thought me an unstaled and impassioned lover. Both judgments would have been mistaken: there is no complete unity in man, and scarcely anyone is ever wholly sincere or wholly false."

Our hero has been much reproached with the sort of impotence which condemned him to detachment from all things, and to giving back, as from a broken mirror, nothing but piecemeal traits; this fatality of his character he has had to bear as a misfortune and a curse on him. But are we quite sure that this very misfortune is not proof of a rare distinction of spirit which regards with disgust all the vulgarities, and follies, and trivial miseries which, sooner or later, come to light and overspread all things?

Adolphe, unlike René, his illustrious contemporary, did not know how to practise the art of make-believe, and treat himself to a wondrous comedy; he was without the wonder-working genius, the lyric power of the author of *Atala* and the *Natchez*; but his taste was more unfailing, he had a clearer sense, a sincerer conscience. The Abbé Morellet, the last representative of the old French good taste, would have found nothing to quarrel with in the irreproachable pages of *Adolphe*. And, no doubt, it was the taste of this man of delicate susceptibility that was so often offended, and it was the declamation, and emphasis, and theatrical flourishes, which displeased a mind informed with the unbedizened elegance of our race.

From the point of view of literature, *Adolphe* is still a masterpiece. Its form is limpid, alive, and delicate; it does not smell of the lamp; the subtlety of its thought never weighs on the simplicity of the style. And the man of letters never reveals his hand, and that is a delight to us in itself. For, even if the literary man be a genius, he is subdued to what he works in, and his work will show the dye.

SAINTE-BEUVE, POET



E have been shown Lamartine, in the early days of the Revolution, reading his *Lac* to ancient *émigrés* in silk stockings and wigs, and dowagers in flowered gowns. The picture strikes the imagination and makes a good contrast. But it would not do to add to it that his audience was affected, for that would be hard to believe. The elders probably concluded that Florian and Parny turned verses better than did this young man. No doubt they went their ways telling one another that it would have its day, like *Atala* and the rest of them. We are all like that; we only love, or only read, the poets of our youth. But when the *Méditations* appeared, in 1820, the youth of the world was in admiration and tears; never did book find so fair a destiny. Men were steeped in all the delights of woe, and every woman was in love with the poet.

The charm was broken, tongues were loosed, poesy came in floods. First, making its way with discretion, it was the *Poèmes antiques et modernes* of Alfred de Vigny, then the *Odes et Ballades* of Victor Hugo, and the verse of the two Deschamps, without reckoning Delavigne for less delicate tastes, and every man's Béranger. Did some hopeful young poet find himself among the admiring crowd at the season of this magnificent flowering, he was divided between enthusiasm and discouragement.

He despaired of making himself heard among voices so great and so happily inspired. The old-time refrain was suited to his sighs:

"Nous n'irons plus au bois,
Les lauriers sont coupés. . . ."

Indeed, in 1826, it had already become difficult for a new poet to attain celebrity. Every commonplace (for it is by the celebration of the commonplace that celebrity is reached) was, or was about to be, exhausted by men like Lamartine and Hugo. Everything that was running in people's heads: Napoleon, the downfall of thrones, melancholy, woebegone love, the sentimental aspects of religion, all this had already been said.

There was still room, it is true, for a poet of an intimate, restrained, and familiar tone, knowing the facts of life to the full, and treating them minutely, with elegance and in a familiar tone. It is the part of a Horace, or a La Fontaine; perhaps the best, when all is said, though young people are not ordinarily envious of it. But even so, did such a poet come, he had not much chance of succeeding. Though all the world may want poetry, no one asks for much. The public takes what is outstanding, what shows from far off, and is satisfied.

Assuredly we love poetry in France; but we have our own way of loving it; we ask of it that it shall be eloquent, and willingly dispense it from being poetic.

Since the Revolution, the Frenchman is become terribly emphatic. He is reached by sonorous words and not by depths of sentiment. The poetry of things escapes him; he asks for drama. The poem that cannot be spoken from the boards of the

theatre is a poem lost to us. In fact, our admirations in verse rank with those of amateurs of music who confine their taste to the military band. The "Marseillaise" is always our style.

All in the midst of this generation, born of Napoleon and the Revolution, a generation liberal yet royalist, Christian yet despairing, ardent, much troubled, and above all things ambitious, a certain young man was finding himself in Paris, a well instructed youth, very shy, sensitive, touchy, and of insinuating personality, and so intelligent that his gift of understanding looked like stifling all his other gifts. Strong, ugly, red-haired, carrying himself well, sensual of nature and sceptical of mind, he wore the white apron of a hospital student, and was a man of little faith; but he had his softer moments when religion came back, and then he knew the breath of mysticism. He loved literature above all things; this was Sainte-Beuve. As we may see, his was no simple nature, he was not all of a piece.

In 1826 he joined, through his former professor of rhetoric, M. Dubois, the liberal paper *Le Globe*, and learnt how to use his weapons in the doctrinaire camp; but his mind differed from theirs in its great measure of adaptability, and background of ideas, in his subtler and bolder literary sense, and by his inclination to reverie, and to sadness.

It is an eternally recurring thing, this sadness of all poets at the dawn of life. It is a critical moment, not without its attraction, and not without danger. They saw but the attractive aspect then, the morbid grace of it. The tone of the century was that of despair, a despair that wore the gilt of illusion, and the myriad-hued iridescence of the

poet's dream. What charm we find, at twenty years, in the distaste for life we draw from works of beauty such as *Werther* and *René!* Our poets wear their melancholy as an adornment, and can make it sweet to us, and harmless to themselves. Olympio, too, was sad. Happily, he did not die of it.

Sainte-Beuve knew the meaning of spleen as well as any. Later on, he sought the cause of this affliction of the spirit in the more secret circumstances of his nativity.

"My mother lost my father in the first year of her marriage; I was then in the womb, and she bore me in mourning and sorrow; I was steeped and watered in the very amnios; and often I have attributed the melancholy of my early years and my tendency to depression, to this maternal grief."*

There is no throwing light on these intimate mysteries. And, moreover, Sainte-Beuve was inoculated with the sickness of his century by another mother, the Revolution. She it was who dowered her sons with divine discontent, with longing for a vague beauty, with the pangs of hunger unassuaged. From '89 onwards, all the limits of what was possible and what impossible were overturned, and disquietude and anguish became infinite.†

These were the circumstances in which Sainte-

* Letter to M. de Fabière, June 25, 1862. (*Correspondance de Sainte-Beuve.*)

† "Then the sickness of the century made itself felt, the trouble of a Werther and of a Faust, the same that, at like moments, had worked in mankind for eighteen hundred years. I mean that discontent of a present, the vague desire for beauty of a better kind, for an ideal happiness, that grief-laden aspiration towards the Infinite. Man suffers from his doubt, and yet he doubts; he tries to recapture his beliefs, but they melt in his grasp." (Taine, *Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, Vol. III.)

Beuve, journalist and sawbones, with his furniture of science, philosophy, and art, and acquainted with all the ideas of his time, composed by candle-light, in his attic, the poems he published in 1828. They were elegies, and could not have been anything else. Among them we find some made pieces, added at the last moment, when the young poet was admitted to the cenacle, I had almost said the workshop, and saw Hugo working with words.

The new writer, in order to lend his poems a more sensible attraction, and a more affecting grace, had recourse to an artifice of which Mérimée, in his *Théâtre de Clara Gazul*, gave another example. The book was presented to the public as the posthumous work of a young poet, Joseph Delorme, who had died of consumption. To lend substance to this fiction, the real author prefaced the book with a life of the supposed author.

It was a fair chance for open confession of self under an assumed name; to show the world all the ideas, passions and feelings fermenting in the head-piece of a young man of decent class, who had vision and understanding for all things, while remaining no one, and living on sixpence a day.

And what is Joseph Delorme, if not young Sainte-Beuve, set forth, studied and adorned with all the lugubrious trappings of the period? But we must mark off all that mode and tradition has to say in him, and distinguish that which is of the essential nature, the real elements, of Sainte-Beuve.

Joseph Delorme is very much like his literary progenitors, Werther, René, Adolphe, and, above all, Obermann. His whole life was indicated in advance by Sénancour in these few lines: "He had no misfortunes of a striking kind; but, at his

entry on this life, he found himself in the ruts of distaste and depression; he stuck in them; he lived in them, grew old in them, before his time, and there he perished."

But Joseph's point of originality was to be frankly middle-class, with no trace of the aristocrat. He is middle-class in birth and in mind; his verse is middle-class even as he is, and is devoted almost exclusively to depicting the average existence. His biography is a small thing handled with much art. Nowadays we are tempted to smile at his recital of sorrows much more imaginary even than himself. We are less self-troubled, and no longer complicate our existence in the same manner. This medical student, attached to a hospital, who, under the wing of various aged savants, conceives himself to be exploited, and falls into dark and haughty gloom, seems to us to have but little sense.

"No sooner had he accepted the duties of a subordinate office, and put himself in a dependent position in regard to his patrons, than he quickly discerned the motives of a benevolence altogether too watchful to be disinterested. He had looked to them to protect him, but not to exploit him. His noble character revolted at the notion. . . . These few months were his undoing."

The case of this Werther-Sawbones is worth remark, but is it of his own finding? No, certainly not; since the time of Rousseau, poor great man, the persecution mania had played havoc with chosen minds of plebeian origin. This characteristic trait in Delorme is well thought of; and connects him with Jean-Jacques.

He knows what love is, of course, after his fashion, which is not of the simplest or most practical; he

is loved, the mother is on his side, the young woman is all expectation and sighs. But he is too much the man of his epoch to be content with any vulgar happiness. He will not speak, and must walk alone. "I bear a sign on my brow," he cries.

Nor did that seem in anywise extravagant. The airs of a Werther were then all the wear at the Chaumière. The other day I heard a very serious and excellent person, who was contemporary with Joseph Delorme, telling a few friends of a diverting passage in his youth. He told us, simply and without affectation, that he was pacing to and fro beneath his mistress's windows with a skull in his hand. And he added that, as the windows failed to open, he had put the skull at the bottom of his box, not to be taken out again but to better purpose. Sainte-Beuve himself, about this time, was visited one night by a young lady of very high position. She put into his hands a skull, as prepared for study. The crown of the skull worked on hinges and made a lid. Within was a lock of her hair. "You will give this to A——," she said.

And, to pass from fact to poetry, I come upon the inevitable death's head once more in a letter addressed by Sainte-Beuve to Fontaney. The poet is describing a room arranged for habitation in some ruined abbey. A winding stair gives access; and it is dimly lighted by ogives, and is full of recesses. There is an old arm-chair and a plain table.

> "Papers, and clothes, and a faded portrait
> Of features once dear, some sheets of a herbal,
> Paint brushes, a flute, daggers, all on one shelf,
> And a crazy violin lodged in a skeleton."

However, Sainte-Beuve, it must be said, did not much affect this style, and soon said good-bye to it.

One indication more rounds off Joseph Delorme's character, and makes him one with every bourgeois of 1828. Sainte-Beuve shows him us as a convinced liberal, but a very moderate one, keeping his head even in his fever, as did M. Auguste Barbier later on in his *Iambes*. Joseph lived long enough to see M. de Martignac in office, and died somewhat reassured. This trait gives one the measure of the bourgeoisie of that day, which was preparing its coming, and was soon to start its reign of eighteen years.

As for the phthisis which killed Joseph Delorme, it never touched Sainte-Beuve, who was no doubt a Joseph Delorme, but a Joseph Delorme who knew what to take and what to leave, and, all things considered, was quite willing to live.

This ghost of a bourgeois hovered in the literary world admired by some, and laughed at by others. The *Globe* office was divided on the matter. M. Guizot called him, very happily, *Werther, jacobin et carabin*, Werther, Jacobin and sawbones. Madame de Broglie said, "It is immoral." Another, more easily affected, was touched, and sighed, "Had I known him, I would have brought him consolation." Sainte-Beuve, on whom a hint was never wasted, took her at her word.

In short, the work had its own hour; it marks, along with the Émile of M. de Girardin, the close of the period of gloomy young men.

The poems of Joseph Delorme, though mingled of sentiment and inspiration and very diverse in tone, are familiar poems: herein lay their originality. Sainte-Beuve was to some degree an innovator; he proffered pictures of small things, an elegy of detailed incident.

His nature and instinct worked together to make

him go as far as possible in the direction of the particular and the precise. His bent is so well determined that when he sings of Italy he invokes no heroic shade. Addressing himself to some fair, humble peasant girl, he will say to her:

"What to me are memories of old time,
And laurels eternal in which I have no faith!
But tell me, nor cease to tell, O young Neapolitan,
Harmonious sounding names of woodland trees
And names whereby you know the hills, and every spring,
And the white houses I see on my horizon."

And he will know a thousand details beyond, a thousand small facts, each nothing in itself, but facts that, put one with another and one after another, make up the whole of life.

He would have domesticated the ode itself, and made into a vehicle of intimacy that which had ever been, whether in celebration of the State or of the Prince, a noble utterance and a sounding pomp: "Quand ton poêle s'éteint" (when your stove goes out), he says in his Ode to David the sculptor.

He was more at home in his use of the elegy, and used every refinement of detail. Not Lamartine, nor Vigny, nor Hugo, nor any other French poet, had tried to do anything like it; Sainte-Beuve went elsewhere for his models. Philarète Chasles, well versed in the literature of the North, had introduced him, they say, to all those various English poets of rare and simple genius. Sainte-Beuve knew and loved them. He made himself familiar with Shelley and Wordsworth, and with Crabbe and Cowper, all those true poets, natural and pure, who gave us a poetry suited to man's latest birth, a poetry bearing the delicate impress of modern feeling.

And he did not forget his debt to them: "The English," he wrote in 1861 to Abbé Constantin Roussel, "have a poetic literature much superior to ours, much saner and much fuller . . . in so far as I am a poet, I have never been but a rivulet flowing from these fair lakes of poesy, so melancholy and so sweet."

A rivulet, since he will have it so, and thin and tortuous at moments, but with a murmur of its own whose pleasurable secret can surprise and trouble us, and is not easily forgotten. I, for instance, shall always remember the modest wish so beautifully expressed:

"Voir ma vigne courir sur mon toit ardoisé!" *

And in the same vein of the Lake School, this natural feature so precisely drawn and so symbolic:

"L'arbre a blanchi le sol de fleurs à peine écloses." †

And, again, this strange and unexpected simile which suddenly lets in the Ideal on a simple Interior: he speaks of a young woman sitting with bowed head

"Et dans ses blonds cheveux ses blanches mains errantes,
Tels deux cygnes nageant dans les eaux transparentes. . . ." ‡

And it is a pleasure to have by heart and call up at times that masterpiece of the poetry of intimacy:

"Toujours je la connus pensive et sérieuse." §

* "To watch my vine climbing on my slated roof."

† "The tree has snowed the ground with blossoms scarce unclosed."

‡ "And through her yellow hair her white hands wandering
Like two swans swimming in transparent waters."

§ "I knew her ever thoughtful and serious."

Another thing that is very near the core, and not less English, is Sainte-Beuve's taste for, and art in depicting, the passion that may be in women without desire, the lascivious grace which is yet a grace, that voluptuousness which is on the surface.

I am thinking less of Rose and her "cheveux débouclés"—her loosened tresses—than of a certain ball-night which ends in a heavily charged atmosphere.

Sainte-Beuve's aspirations are not all purity. It is a long way from the little stream of Ouse, whereby Cowper walked in childlike enjoyment and gifted innocence, to the student's chamber in the Rue Monsieur-le-Prince, stirred with the lust of many things. Sainte-Beuve's was, elementally, a tortured nature, troubled and harsh. In Joseph Delorme is one very odd piece that every reader has scored in his time, and whereon I must necessarily pause a moment. You will guess that I am going to speak of the *Rayons jaunes*—the Yellow Rays. Sainte-Beuve read one day, in Mademoiselle Volland's correspondence, a new observation and a fruitful one, such as the magnanimous and talkative Diderot was throwing out all his lifelong on every side. This is the passage, as Sainte-Beuve himself was scrupulous to point out:

"A simple physical quality may prove a leading string to the mind which lends itself to it, and guide it to an infinity of different matters. Take a colour, yellow for instance: gold is yellow, silk is yellow, straw is yellow; to how many other threads may this thread not lead? The lunatic does not notice the change; he holds a stalk of shining yellow straw in his hand, and exclaims that he has seized a ray of sunlight."

Hereupon Sainte-Beuve devised a sort of elegy in strophes, in the course of which he gathered together various memories and fancies linked by the yellow thread suggested by Diderot. Starting with a ray from the setting sun, traversing his room, he links up the church where in his childhood he saw the *yellow* lamps and the *yellowed* brow of the old priest, with the *yellow* ivory of the crucifix, and the *yellow* missal which is the believer's solace, then with the *yellow* candles round the death-bed of his old aunt, then with the yellowed *pallium* of the marriage service which never shall be held out over his own head, condemned (he does not say why) to single loneliness, and finally with the rose which shall never *yellow* above his deserted grave. The sequence of ideas is not forced; and it should have a natural effect to give the impression of a random train of thought. It does nothing of the sort, however. The poem lacks naturalness. It is laboured and affected, and the reason is not far to find. We are not led from one idea to another by analogies of form, colour, or scent, except on condition of not perceiving the thread of connection which guides us, or rather leads us astray. As soon as we see it, we break it. Sainte-Beuve, on the contrary, sets himself to show the leading string. As he exerts himself to show how this is yellow and that is yellow, he seems to say to one: "Observe how ingeniously I pass from one yellow to another." But this is not to let the fancies flow, it is the laborious winning of a wager. He would have been better inspired if, in assembling his images of like shade, he had done as the man of whom Diderot speaks, the madman who does not follow his own change of thought; such as each one of us may be, in his hour.

Since I have the book open at this passage about yellow rays, I will make one more remark before I turn the page. The poet, having evoked in memory the death-bed of his aged aunt, reflects:

> "And yet she loved me . . . my mother loves me too
> And she, my mother too, shall die."

The reflection shocks one, in an elegy; it is expressed with such harshness.* It is impossible not to see the direct borrowing of this thought from François Villon:

> "Si ne suis, bien le considère,
> Filz d'ange, portant dyadème. . . .
> Mon père est mort, Dieu en ayt l'ame.
> Quant est du corps, il gyst soubz lame,
> *J'entends que ma mère mourra,*
> Et le filz pas ne demourra."

François Villon, born in a harsh and gloomy age, the age of the Dance of Death, was not much given to tenderness. He was a bad fellow, but he showed himself in this particular case, of better heart and more delicate of expression than his modern imitator. If he tells himself that his mother must die, nor stops short there, it is not because any yellow ray has crossed his mind's vision; it is

* It is with the poet, and with the poet alone, that I quarrel. Madame Sainte-Beuve died November 17th, 1850, at the age of eighty-six. We may see, from a fragment of a letter written to Abbé Barbe, that Saint-Beuve felt her loss deeply: "I left her (my mother) cheerful and smiling, at half-past six o'clock Half an hour later, her pains returned in more acute form, and, in a moment, stopped the current of life. I had thought myself alone before that, and to-day I perceive, for the first time, that truly I am alone, and that I have none to turn back to.

"Nor have I any to go before, for I have let the season of marriage go by, and its links which attach us to the future. . . ." (*Les jeunes années de Sainte-Beuve.* Letter XVI.)

because he reflects, as a Christian may, that all Adam's race is condemned to die, and does not disjoin the thought of his mother's death from that of his own: *Et le filz pas ne demourra.* This trait of feeling is not in Sainte-Beuve's strophe. But this is going into too great detail, and yielding to the pleasure, so much in Sainte-Beuve's line, of noting the finer shades. I must resume. Apart from the English influence, and putting on one side the little poems not wanting in purity and interest, the *Poésies de Joseph Delorme* lack calm, lack serenity. The language is as distorted as the thought. The verse is involved, but, though laboured and distasteful, is not vulgar. This poetry of his goes on a lame foot, but, alternatively, it keeps within bounds. In other words, it is a fermented liquor, rough and sharp-flavoured, but it has its bouquet and savour.

In Sainte-Beuve's first volume, there is a composition on the subject of rhyme, and an ode addressed to the new *cénacle*, that is, the gathering of the apostles of romanticism. It means that Victor Hugo already had his grip on the young editor of the *Globe*. Their connection dated from the beginning of the year 1827. Sainte-Beuve had published in the *Globe* of January 2nd and 9th an article on the theory and poetic work of Victor Hugo. The critic showed no kindness towards the æsthetics of romanticism; he saw a "superior talent" in Hugo, but an inflation that spoilt it. He reproached him with "awkward similes" and "impropriety in the use of terms," etc. These are but a few beads from the string. Victor Hugo went to return thanks for the notice. Before he became pope he must have mounted a number of

such stairs. Sainte-Beuve saw the man, and was vanquished, overcome. Thenceforth Hugo had one disciple more, I had nearly said one faithful disciple, but the restlessness of an unceasingly stirring intelligence must be reckoned with. After the publication of *Joseph Delorme*, Sainte-Beuve had his corner in the master's salon, or, to put it better his *pric-dieu* in the chapel, behind those of Vigny, the two Deschamps, and Boulanger, the painter.* The magic of the resort worked on his mind.

Joseph Delorme survived his own decease to such good purpose that he knew a further publication entitled *Poésies du lendemain ou dans le même ton* (Poems of the Morrow or in the same vein). In this posthumous existence he refines upon himself and strives to suggest the Anthology in his poems. It is in his most intimate and familiar moments that he would suggest Callimachus or Meleager. The pretension might be worse founded. It is not by playing the Greek that one comes nearest to being Greek. The Greeks were no archæologists, and ignored all worlds but their own. They kept a just measure and never used emphasis in the wrong place. From this point of view, a verse altogether French, right in feeling and phrase, and making a

* Among the assiduous frequenters of the house, there were two who came every day: M. Louis Boulanger . . . and M. Sainte-Beuve, charming talker as eminent writer. . . . They would come and finish the evening in the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs. M. Victor Hugo, at the request of his two friends, would recite the verses he had made that day. Or he would ask as much of Sainte-Beuve, who, forced to comply, but confused that attention should be on him, would tell little Léopoldine and fat Charlot to make a noise while he spoke. But they did not, and one listened to the beautiful verses of *Joseph Delorme* and *Consolations*. (*Victor Hugo raconté par un témoin de sa vie.*)

natural appeal, may have, for those who know, more of the perfume of antiquity than some tirade on the Atrides. A familiarity not base but noble, liberty within bounds, easy command of beauty, these are things so Greek, that they may hardly be met with under other skies without their bringing a breath of Greece.

Less than a year after *Joseph Delorme* had been launched, its author put out, in December, 1829, under his own name this time, a new collection of poems, the *Consolations*. The whole volume breathes the liveliest and tenderest devotion for Victor Hugo. Sainte-Beuve was tormented, towards this period, with an overweening desire for communion and for marriage. His mystic marriage in the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs, near where he had his hermitage, is one of the oddest of psychological phenomena. The dedication of the *Consolations* is an ejaculatory prayer the meaning and bearing of which is not to be understood to-day. I imagine that, strongly attached as he was in those days to the author of *Cromwell*, he found his greatest pleasure in concocting devotional exercises in the style of St. Teresa or St. Catherine of Sienna. The master he so greatly venerated he did not imitate in deed. He never risked the flamboyant, and avoided all cast-off trappings of romantic mediævalism as one would the plague. The *Consolations* are elegies of intimacy; a conversation, a walk, something read, some incident of domesticity, furnish the subject-matter of these little poems, wholesome and sweet of inspiration in spite of certain touches of a sensuous mysticism. They show an affectation of piety altogether different from piety itself. Religion is, for him, a seasoning which lends additional

savour to voluptuousness.* I may be permitted to repeat here, very pertinently, what I have said elsewhere. "When Monsieur de Saint-Cyran said, in that house where all hung on his word, that Virgil was a lost soul because of the beauty of his verse, he must, in the eyes of a young scholar quick to feel, have enveloped the shade of Dido with a melancholy and delicious charm. Religion offers to the voluptuous of soul one sensuous pleasure more —that of the soul's eternal loss."

Chateaubriand, who gave us so amorous a picture of the penitent but delicious memories of Velleda's lover, knew well how pleasure was enhanced by remorse. George Sand shows us the same feeling in Magnus the monk by Lelia's side. This mingling of emotions comes about at periods of failing faith, in souls that are three parts enfranchised. Sainte-Beuve excelled in it. How often must he, in his room of a night, have plunged himself in the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, to feed his imagination on the thought that a kiss had damned him or put his soul in danger! Under this double dye of the mystic and the sensual, the *Consolations* show a delicate and penetrating poetry. The first of them, addressed to Madame V. H——:

"Plus fraîche que la vigne au bord d'un antre frais." †

* Thirty years later, Sainte-Beuve, grown old "and having chased away the clouds," spoke very lightly of his former mysticism. He avowed quite plainly to Madame H. A. de Meritens that his incense had been for women. "I practised Christian mythology a little in my time," he says, "but it has evaporated. It was a sort of Leda's swan for me, a method of getting at pretty women, of spinning a soft net of love. Youth can take its time, and turn all things to its purpose."

† "Fresher than vine leaves o'er a grotto cool."

is perhaps, among the poetry of intimacy that France has produced, its truest note of melancholy.

Recall to your mind that woman, happy and yet breathing sighs, and that poet who bethinks him that:

"Ce ciel restera bleu quand nous ne serons plus," *

and would find some thought which may "console in the midst of happiness."

And here is a wish to garner:

"Naître, vivre et mourir dans la même maison," †

and all that follows. Nothing can be tenderer or wiser.

The third *Consolation*, consecrated to the memory of humble forbears, is also simple and grave of tone. Altogether, the volume is excellent. It was composed—he tells us so himself—in happy circumstances. Sainte-Beuve was then in love. He wrote from Paris, on December 18th, 1851, to the Abbé Barbe, the friend of his childhood, whom he respected to the point of dread:

"I have known many a grief these last months, griefs of the kind one shuns by lying close betimes. The passion I had called for and seen in glimpses, I have now known; it is lasting, and a thing come to stay, and has introduced into my life many a necessity and much bitter mixed with sweet, and a duty of sacrifice which will have its good effect, but costs much to human nature."‡

* "The sky will still be blue when we are gone."

† "Be born, live and die in the same house."

‡ *Les jeunes années de Sainte-Beuve.* M. François Morand, the author of this very curious book, inserts here the following note: "This passion has not remained altogether a mystery in Sainte-Beuve's life. But it was not avowed." We are to understand that there was no public, or published, avowal. It was made in confidence often enough.

Later, and in his decline, he took pleasure in remembering the six months of heaven he had known in his life, the months which produced the *Consolations*.

His months were ordinarily passed in more earthly wise. Since certain weaknesses of his filled considerable place in his life, and in his work, we will pass this point without dwelling on it. He tells us, not without a certain grace, of his early loves, of his Beatrices of Boulogne-sur-Mer. Had I not, he says:

"... n'eus-je pas ma Camille,
Douce blonde au front pur, paisible jeune fille,
Qu'au jardin je suivais, le dévorant des yeux?
N'eus-je pas Nathalie, au parler sérieux
Qui remplaça Camille, et plus d'une autre encore?"

Here and there he owns to amours of less childish kind, and equally fleeting.

Sainte-Beuve was ugly; his big red head and raddled face tended to the ridiculous. He was not cut out for seduction, or, at any rate, had not the air of the seducer, and he was sensitive of his appearance, for there was something of the Lovelace in him. The good looks of a Byron or a Chateaubriand would have served his lickerish turn; he had to content himself with underhand adventure, and very sneaking conquests. Still, had he not his hour when some fortune, fairer and more desirable, was his? It is said that he had, and the final reply to such falling out of events is: Why not?

"... had I not my Camille,
Fair, and of candid brow, untroubled and young,
Whom I would follow in the garden, feasting my eyes?
Had I not Nathalie, of serious speech,
Camille's dispossessor; and others yet?"

Some years passed, following the smooth and good-omened success of the *Consolations*, and the poet came forward again with a new face. The *Pensées d'août* were published in 1837. This was on his return from Geneva. Love, both terrestrial and divine, had perished from his soul, and spring was over; he was on the down grade. Many things were dead in him, but not his so admirable faculty of understanding. He said himself, of his own soul: "Intelligence shines, like the moon's dead face, on the cemetery that I am."

There is small aspiration or self-disclosure, and no word of love, in the *Pensées d'août*. The poet no longer pours out his plaint; he says what he has to say. Sainte-Beuve, speaking of his *Pensées d'août*, said jokingly: "I had given them *Joseph Delorme*, and the *Consolations*; I had nothing left but a rat's tail, and I twisted it as I could." Rat's tail or beaver's tail, it is certainly curiously twisted.

Les Pensées d'août bordered on prose; Sainte-Beuve, as he said himself, made his verse "simple, at will"; he thought he had discovered a *musa pedestris*, a note suited to age and wisdom. But the public set its face against it this time and, as the author says, gave the volume a thoroughly angry reception. The longest of the poems, *Monsieur Jean*, surprised and wounded public susceptibilities.

The Monsieur Jean in question is a natural son of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, turned village schoolmaster and remaining simple and brave in his faith and way of life. He sets himself to expiate, by the practice of a humble piety and the exercising of unmarked virtues, his father's scandal and fame. The poet conceives of it as a Puritan may, and relates it in familiar style. The tale as set out, is grey, and

sad and painful. One follows it with that indefinable feeling of weariness and melancholy, attended by a charm of sadness, that we may experience in trudging across an impoverished country-side under a rain-charged sky, along roads deep with ruts. But Society was angered. "What a dry and stony path," said every one. "The rough places are part of my design," replied Sainte-Beuve. "My verse wounds your ear, but it has its proper harmony; you are insensible to my assonance and my alliteration." "Mon Dieu," cried the Academicians, the journalists, and the learned ladies, "how insipid and repulsive is this schoolmaster of yours!"

But Sainte-Beuve would not give in. His village teacher was his Jocelyn, no ideal and romantic Jocelyn, but a particular and precisionised Jocelyn, a man, and a very ordinary one. The poet knew exactly what he intended, and made him to his mind. He wanted, to use his own expression, to arrive at "that particularity and precision which makes the creatures of our mind our very own, and recognizable by every man."* And that, in fact, he arrived at. Moreover, it had become necessary to come down from the clouds and touch solid earth. Poetry was become too tenuous, and was losing itself in the vague. We feel it to this hour. As it was, he had hit on a kind of poetry which has been much appreciated since, and wherein many excel in our own day, and that without annoying anybody.

Sainte-Beuve gave himself scope in this last collection of poems. He twists his fancies as seems good to him. He asks himself what Royer-Collard

* M. Denton had also produced his Jocelyn, *l'Ange tentateur*, which Sainte-Beuve found too like Lamartine. (*Correspondence.*)

and Boileau would have said, both, to the modern school of poetry; he fancies Voltaire present at a discourse of M. Patin. The style, tormented to excess, is often of a quite disconcerting oddity. Already, in *Joseph Delorme*, one had noticed elipses hard to get over, such as:

"Sur ma table un lait pur, dans mon lit un œil noir." *

But that is classicism alongside such verses as this, to be found in the *Pensées d'août:*

"Mais sa taille bondit et chasserait le renne." †

Some pages further on I notice a *maillot vagissant.*‡ The worst of it is that all these audacious strokes are minutely calculated for effect. Among the more amazing antics of his later manner, is to be noticed the suppression of the article, and the employment of comparatives, that do not compare:

". . . Ce Pline au goût sûr et *meilleur*,
André Chénier en proie à sa flamme *moins belle.*
. . . Les rayons de cette ombre *plus sûre.*" §

He is very fond of verbs without object, whose meaning is thus held in suspense:

"Despréaux l'éternel que toujours on oppose." ‖

Note, furthermore, a kind of jargon of his invention, not to be understood without a measure of sagacity. What is to be said of *souvenirs retraçants* and

* "Pure milk on my table, in my bed a dark eye."
† "Her figure full and springing, as if to chase the deer (?)."
‡ *Maillot* = close-fitting vesture; *vagissant* = wailing.
§ ". . . This Pliny of sure taste and *better*,
André Chénier victim to his flame *less fair.*
. . . The shadows from a *surer* dark."
‖ "The eternal Despréaux to whom one is ever opposed."

souvenirs sortants, of a *désert qui reçut les écoliers plus courants*, or of the *miette finissante* of a loaf?* All this has repelled readers, who have not cared to seek out from amidst these unpleasing eccentricities the delicate and charming verse which is there in plenty. There are very admirable lines in the *Fontaine de Boileau*, and in the *Épîtres* to Villemain and to M. Patin. And, moreover, do we not find in the *Pensées d'août* the delicious sonnet on the Young Genevoise "aux beaux regards contrits" and the rare and exquisitely graceful strophes on a portrait of Gerard? Though the gold be not pure, it is treasure for all that.

To sum up, *Joseph Delorme*, the *Consolations*, and the *Pensées d'août* mark the diverse aspects of a single nature. We see Sainte-Beuve in them, always himself, under three different aspects. It is so with all of us; we never rest the same for a moment, and yet we are never other than what we are. We are always in motion, but we never change. Sainte-Beuve, under his three poetical habits, shows himself even as the sensual, troubled, perspicacious man he could not but be, so long as he was Sainte-Beuve. The rest is accidental, and matter of circumstance. We see him in *Joseph Delorme* under the scourge of sharp desire, and still retaining his youthful illusion of unhappiness. It is the last to be got rid of. One believes for long that one is loaded with singular ill-fortune, and dowered with a magnificent gift of sadness. And then we make the discovery one fine day that this is vanity, and that even when we grieve we tread

* "Memories that retrace; memories that come forth; desert that received more wandering scholars; the finishing crumb of a loaf."

the common path of all. The *Consolations* mark this moment in life. Sainte-Beuve here shows himself as tranquil as it was possible for him to be, almost at peace, satisfied almost; and this is why his emotion is purged and his self-expression softened in tone. But desire, which alone lent beauty to things, dies down with age. No aspect smiles. Farewell to mystery, to charm, and the magnificence that nature held for us, that made us move in an enchanted world! We slacken, we yield ourselves no more.

We withdraw, we are deceived; and, what is crueller still, we deceive. Then it is that we feel an invasion of disgust, with self and with others. But the intelligence still rears its head and reigns above the passions laid in ruins. To understand and to explain becomes our sole care. We use words for mere recital, as matter of interest, without feeling or fire, and we come to the *Pensées d'août*.

So, following the poet in his course, we see the whole man. Thus nothing must be overlooked in this poetry in which is depicted for our eyes the most searching, sagacious, and complicated spirit that an ageing civilization has ever produced.

ALBERT GLATIGNY

HE was a tall, thin apparition, with long legs and long feet. His hands, loosely hung, were enormous. His face, long and without beard, was split by a big bold, kind-looking mouth. His eyes, deep-set beyond his red and prominent cheek-bones, were still keen and expressive, though they were fatigued. When I first saw him he was nothing but skin and bone. His skin, parched with fever and wintry blasts, thinly covered his large and awkward frame. His inoffensive effrontery, the desires ever awake in him and never satisfied, his greed of life, of love, of song, made him a good picture of Panurge. The amusing side of things he knew, as Brantôme would say, better than his daily bread; though that, truth to tell, might be little enough, for his fasting days were not a few. He was a Panurge, but a Panurge in the moon. The queer fellow had a head teeming with visions. All the knights and ladies of romance and of the Renaissance found lodging in his brain, and lived and danced and sang there—a continuous saraband. He saw, he heard nothing else, and this sublunary world touched him but vaguely. And so he never sought his own advantage in it, and never saw any danger that might threaten. Even when he trailed his rags on the high roads, broken by cold, hunger, and sickness, he was lost in

enchanting dreams; he went in velvet doublet, and drank from goblets of gold, and dazzled his eye with the romance of Fairyland. The poor fellow was good and great of heart. For all his astounding illusions, he was afire with all manner of fine friendships. He was full of gratitude towards the poets who had revealed to him his own genius and lent him his knowledge of the gay sciences, towards friends who felt anxiety for him on account of the incredible destitution that he himself scarce perceived, and towards the admirable woman who, at the last hour, showed him the noblest and purest love, and brought inexpressible consolation to him in his last days. He held his way through life, turning verses gay, brilliant, and witty, with the ease that comes from knowledge, verses that mark the poet. And this seems to warrant the dedication of a few pages to the life of such a Don Quixote of romantic poetry, one who was good, devoted, generous, and whose only error, and a rare one, was to see lilies where others see but grasses of the field.

Albert Glatigny was nurtured in a country home in Calvados, where a scent of cider was in the air, and hams hung from the smoke-blackened beams.

A gallant gendarme, and a peasant-woman as brave, gave him poor and honest parentage.*

* Here, at the outset, we are faced with a strange difficulty. I cannot accept as my hero's birth-certificate (may the name of hero bring contentment to the shade of Albert Glatigny!) the certificate quoted as such in the volume entitled *Albert Glatigny, sa vie, son œuvre*, par Job Lazare. Paris, Bécus, 1878. This document, which I quote from M. Job Lazare, bears witness as follows:

"*Mayoralty of Lillebonne.* On the twenty-eighth day of the month of June, eighteen hundred and forty-three, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, certified the birth of a child brought before us, and of the male sex, at the domicile of his father and mother herein-

The parent stock was good, and it should have taken many a wintry blast and many a frost to wither the shoot. Albert Glatigny, as soon as he was breeched, went to school and received along with all the urchins of the village, "the manna of good doctrine," uniformly distributed to all little Normans. But little Albert added a morsel of ambrosia to his share. When not yet fifteen he explored the loft under the paternal roof. In province and country-side lofts are secret places full of mysterious things where small boys of inquisitive turn make wonderful discoveries. Jean-des-Figues, and Cousin Mitre's Trunk, are sufficient illustration. "This trunk had been relegated to the very top, under the roof, stowed away with worm-eaten

after named. Son of Isidore Clement Glatigny, aged twenty-one, foreman, and of Louise-Victorine Leber, his wife, aged eighteen, living together at Lillebonne, and married in that town, the 12th March, 1842. The said child has received the name of Ernest Albert. . . ."

But a letter announcing the death of the poet bears this express mention:

"MM. Glatigny (Joseph-Sénateur), Madame Glatigny (Rose-Alexandrine); M. Glatigny (Arthur) et leur famille; Madame Glatigny (Emma); M. Victor Garien, have the honour to acquaint you with the sad loss which they have sustained in the person of M. Glatigny (Albert-Joseph-Alexandre) . . . who died on Wednesday, April 16th, 1873, at his residence, 11 Avenue de Bellevue, Sèvres."

This document, issued, under the eyes of the mother and of the widow of the poet, by his brother-in-law, contradicts the certificate given by M. Job Lazare on three essential points: (1) the Christian names of the parents of the deceased; (2) those of the deceased man himself, which are become *Albert-Joseph* and are no longer *Ernes Albert;* and (3) the presumed date of his birth, which is now brought up to 1839.

The birth-certificate published by M. Job Lazare must be that of a cousin of the poet.

sideboards, frameless pictures, and broken-down arm-chairs. It was Poor Mitre's Trunk."* Jean-des-Figues opened it and found divers things, such as gloves, slippers, women's likenesses, love-letters and a Turkish pipe—things that made a madman and a poet of him for the rest of his days.

Albert Glatigny made, in the gendarme's loft, one of those discoveries which, like Aladdin's wonderful Lamp or Cousin Mitre's Trunk, determine a strange destiny for the finder. Albert Glatigny found, among the old boxes, a book—and this book was not, as might be supposed, the double or triple *Liégeois*, the *Lame Messenger*, the *History of Estelle and Nemorin*, the *Key of Dreams*, the *Four Sons of Aymon*, the *Town and Country Cook*, the *Biography of General Cavaignac*, or the *Invention of the True Cross*, suitable for the instruction of the good villager; it was an odd volume of *The Works of Messire Pierre de Ronsard, Gentleman of Vendôme*. This famous volume, which had been turned out in 1560 from the press of Gabriel Buon, was sleeping there in the dust, after three centuries of ill-usage and neglect, in a silence broken only by the gnawing of rats and the mewing of cats. Young Albert Glatigny opened the book, and, marvellous to tell, he understood that proud and old-time tongue, that beautiful latinized speech, the gallant ways, the braveries of rhythm, the ancient forms, the figured golds and ladies, in a word, all the lyre that sang so clear in the France of the Valois. This village lad, devouring the odes of the prince of all the old French rhymers, discovers his noble origin and proves himself of the race of poets. I declare that there were not then in France, in all her universities

* Paul Arène, *La Gueuse parfumée*, p. 23.

and academies, twenty people capable of reading Ronsard as that little peasant read him.*

But what was to become of him? Your young country lad, with like knowledge of arithmetic and Bible tales, usually makes acquaintance with the paternal plough and scythe. If he has tastes above his condition, and if he is well conducted and poorly off, he enters the seminary and turns priest. And there are industries in the towns to tempt young fellows who have the use of their hands. The carving of furniture, for instance, is an attractive calling. The country art of the flowered cupboard and sideboard is falling into desuetude, more's the pity. But, if one has one's wits in one's fingers, a livelihood may still be gained by the carving of eglantines and daisy chaplets in heart of oak. Did these tempt Albert Glatigny? Was he, as formerly Maître Adam at Nevers, to handle the jack-plane and make his songs the while? No; he was of a vagabond humour, and if he became, as he did, an attorney's clerk (there is no lack of lawyers in Normandy) it was merely an excuse for jumping about the gutters all day, and going the longest way round on his errands. I don't know what little village street saw glitter in the sun against its grey walls the brass plate of the official who, for his sins, had the gendarme's offspring as office-boy; but I imagine that he must have breathed a sigh of relief when, one fine morning (it must have been a fine morning), he no longer saw in his office the shape of the demented Faun to whom he had imprudently entrusted the service of his writs. That sucking clerk had, Tom Thumb wise, put on his Seven-

* This story of the *Ronsard* found in the attic was told by Albert Glatigny to José-Maria de Heredia, from whom I have it.

league boots, and made off at a stride. He went into a printing house as apprentice.

The printing works were at Pont-Audemer, and Glatigny, in paper-cap and standing over the form, completed his education by reading the Pont-Audemer Journal.

He seemed likely to become a man of letters, when he witnessed some performances given at Pont-Audemer by a troop of strolling players. What did the flare-lights show him? Some poor devils playing at great personages, starvelings in wide-topped boots, rags, and grimaces? No, certainly. He saw a world of splendour and magnificence. The grease-stained back-cloths, and tattered skies, were to him a revelation of nature, now first seen, and a thing of ravishment. Their big words, and badly uttered, were his introduction to Passion; his eyes were opened; he saw, he believed, he worshipped. With all the ardour of a neophyte he received baptism into the profession and entered the confraternity. The gentlemen of the stage knew a princely condescension, and judged that the printer's apprentice could prompt as well as another. As for our friend, it was not his ambition to flour his face, wear the wired butterfly over the back of his head, and take kicks in keeping, but rather to don the plumed hat, wrap himself in a Spanish cloak, and trail the long rapier, the dread of traitors. Now, his carnival-mask of a face, his long carcass as interminable as a day of fast, his great feet which preceded his entry on the scene, made him a very different personage from Mélingue, and altogether unsuited to go in velvet and silk. And when I tell you that in addition to a Norman accent of the purest, the whining speech of Bernay, he was

afflicted with a stutter which made him swallow half his words, you will acknowledge that it was in strict justice that he was hissed and hooted.

From Pont-Audemer he went to Falaise, from Falaise to Nevers, from Nevers to Épinal, from Épinal to Belfort, from Belfort to I know not where, and from Paris to Brussels. At Brussels in 1866 he was simply pitiful. He thought himself sublime. But what was there that was not sublime in his eyes?

His comic romance was at full. In mid-winter, cotton his only wear, he fell in love with a princess of the boards and tried for her favours as though there were no agricultural and commercial gentlemen in every town and prefecture for her to meet and pick up as she went along. He thought himself a Destin; he saw in her a Mademoiselle de l'Étoile. Misfortune had it that his Étoile knew nothing of the poetry of love. The unhappy Destin, overwhelmed with despair, tried to stab himself to the heart with his pocket-knife, laid his thumb open instead, and was still, and none the less, a most detestable comedian.

He succeeded infinitely better in poetry. It was at Alençon, so they say, that Théodore de Banville's *Odes funambulesques* came under his notice. These lyric poems, filled with mockery, and capricious grace, and joy of spirit, and charming fancy; this book, first read as a trifle, and then re-read as a masterpiece, finished the initiation that had been begun by old Ronsard. The trees of blue and skies of rose, the lilies and the laburnums; these courtesans and their wit, these smiling and disjoint men of letters, this charming world of absurdity which affords a feast of fools, and where the foolish exist but to amuse the wise; this world, where all things smile, and sparkle, and end in smoke, was

the real world as it looked to our Glatigny, to him who saw the same blue and the same rose, but could not yet speak, and spelt out, as ardent scholar, the *Odes funambulesques* and, without a break, the poetry of Victor Hugo, of Alfred de Vigny, of Charles Baudelaire, and of Leconte de Lisle.

He came to full possession of his wits in Paris, on entering the Brasserie des Martyrs, in the company of Baudelaire, Monselet, Malassis, and Charles Bataille. Then he produced the *Vignes folles*. He was eighteen years of age.

Even as he had divined Ronsard, he divined Paris at first sight, and became Parisian on the spot; but his vagabond humour got the upper hand, and he once more took the road.

How is one to relate this comic romance—as he lived it, with all the hallucinatory illusions born of the continuous dream of his existence? The tale would be of magnificent pattern, but it would ask, for the telling, no ordinary imagination. Should I, on the other hand, dwell on all the misery, all the humiliations of which he himself was unaware? My recital would be a very sad and a very monotonous business. And what would be the good? Will not this solitary incident suffice? It dates from about 1864; Glatigny, already ill and spitting blood, wrote to his friend Jules de Prémaray:

"I shall play the prompter; I can only issue from my hiding hole and appear on the stage in costume-pieces, because then the theatre furnishes the costume."

And so I come immediately to his hour of glory. This arrived for our player in Paris, for glory is of Paris. He played the part of a passer-by in the *Deux Aveugles* at the Bouffes. This transitory character drops a halfpenny in a blind man's hat,

and passes on without saying anything. Glatigny had not the halfpenny. At this juncture he turned out his pockets and said: "I have nothing for you to-day, my good fellow." This sentence, for which he was sharply fined, was about all that the Paris public ever heard from him in the way of prose recital. About the same period he played in Alfred de Vigny's *Othello* at the Théâtre-Lyrique, the part of third senator. He had a line and a half to speak, and got two francs a night.

I have kept, for the end, the incident best worth remembering in his dramatic career. It was in the provinces, I know not where. *Andromaque* was being performed, unhappily for Racine. Glatigny's was the modest rôle of *Pylade*, and he did not shine in it. Ill-pleased with himself, and persuaded, since he was a convinced romantic, that Racine was absurd, he allowed himself a most gross, though very innocent, pleasantry. In the first scene of Act III, in announcing the entry of Hermione (I do not know who the Hermione was; Heaven send that her days end in peace darning her family's socks!) our Pylade from Normandy gave the three lines as written by the author of *Andromaque*, and then added two more altogether unknown to the text. "Gardez," said he,

> "Gardez qu'avant le coup votre dessein n'éclate:
> Oubliez jusque-là qu'Hermione est ingrate:
> Oubliez votre amour. Elle vient, je la *vois*,
> Et, si *celle* du sang n'est point une chimère,
> Tombe aux pieds de ce sexe à qui tu dois ta mère." *

* "Beware lest your design too early be declared:
Forget Hermione's mood till all shall be prepared:
Forget your love. She comes, I see her now,
And if the tie of blood be real, and of worth,
Acknowledge on your knees the sex that gave you birth."

The effect of these two lines from Legouvé, linked to Racine's text, completely deceived the expectation of the facetious Pylade. The provincial aristocracy of the theatre, far from suspecting any malice, was transported with admiration of the liveliest, and the leaders were the first to applaud.

Glatigny had, all the same, a merited success on the stage, not as an actor, but as improvisator. In some *café-chantant* in Paris, the Alcazar as I have heard, he gave performances in this kind which were marvellous. He would ascend the stage, after some singer or ventriloquist, and make verses on any rhymes called out by the audience. He left Pradel far behind him in this sort of exercise, and his ability to give meaning and wit, smoothness and easily grasped sequence, to lines put together impromptu on rhymes linked at haphazard, surprised those capable of judging, amused a momentary public, and may be noted as a singular fact. But the thing that must not be overlooked is that Glatigny never allowed any scrap of these *bouts-rimés*, to get into the hands of the curious and to risk publication. He knew, since he could make verse, that this was none. Before I am done with the vagabond side of his career, his errant life as we say of Ulysses, I must make mention of a personage immortalized by the poet in a sonnet.

Glatigny was followed in all his wanderings by a female companion whom he adored. She was of doubtful origin and vulgar aspect, but she did not want heart or understanding. Her name was Cosette, and she went on four legs, for she was no learned dog. Glatigny was never to be seen without Cosette, and André Gill, who drew a portrait of the poet, did not fail to put in Cosette to

complete the picture. Cosette had her weaknesses, and gave way to them.

Glatigny, annoyed with her, whelmed her with the reproach: "What will Monselet think of you?" In a letter where he gaily relates the suffering and ill-treatment he has encountered, he adds: "My poor little dog got a kick in the stomach which nearly killed her. That made me cry." The circumstances in which Cosette was treated with such brutality were singular, and worth recounting.

On January 11th, 1869, after many adventures on the road, Glatigny, then at Bocagnano, in Corsica, was taken up by a gendarme and put in gaol, where he stayed four days under suspicion of having assassinated a magistrate. The gendarme, possessed of impertinence and idiocy, had taken him for Jud, then being searched for on all sides, and not to be found. The gendarme of Bocagnano was like other watch-dogs: he disliked badly dressed people, and his suspicions were awakened at the very sight of our poet-comedian's tattered coat and breeches. That much one can read in the charge, a document in which one comes across such phrases as: "Our attention was directed to this individual who seemed to shun observation." But what is harder to believe, and yet equally true, is that he found a magistrate willing to lend ear to this robust language, to reply, "Yes, indeed," to the luminous observations of the police, and to lodge the culprit in a cell whence the Attorney-General had him liberated, as one may imagine, in all haste.

Glatigny exhibited plenty of wit and good humour in the affair. He took innocent vengeance

on the gendarme and the assistant-magistrate by telling of their deeds and sayings in a very entertaining little book. It would have been easy for him, and also to his profit, to declaim about it, to take a high tone, to make it a political matter, and one concerning social rights, but, as I have said, Glatigny had his full share of wit. And he was without bitterness, and incapable of bearing a grudge. This stupid performance, this incredible business of his arrest, was all the more odious because the victim of it, worn-out with ten years of starvation and misery, was in a most wretched and broken-down condition. Three parts blind, crippled with rheumatism, his stomach gone, and ravaged with consumption, Glatigny had used up his poor body to the last fibre.

Here is what he writes from Santa-Lucia, in October, 1869, to the friend who hides his identity under the name of Job-Lazare:

"I fear that I shall not have much more occasion to write to you. It is impossible for me to leave Corsica, for want of means, for none of the papers to which I have sent copy has replied. Another thing is that I am much worse; no doctor, no anything, utterly alone, and my chest in a state that makes me think that I have not much further to go. I wish you better health than mine. I must stop, on account of my eyes.

"Soon to be your *late* friend, "A. G."

In such condition, in the early days of 1870, this child of Normandy, prodigal of himself, came, dragging his limbs to the paternal roof, and sank, done for, but smiling, on the low seat in front of the blazing hearth. Before long, he was able to sit

on the threshold, under the bare vine, and lean his back against the wall warmed by the misty spring sunshine, and there dream, and make his rhymes, and maybe, regret the *brasseries* of the Latin quarter, and the wayside inns he had known.

Sick unto death, he tasted some hours of respite; and then the war broke out. The German armies, reaching out for Paris, drove in front of them, among other fugitives, a young orphan of American birth, but French upbringing, who, two years before, had known the wandering poet at Nice, where she was living with her brother. When Mademoiselle Emma Dennie set up her abode at Beaumesnil, Glatigny left it. We shall see, shortly, the reason of this flight of his, and how it was that the poor fellow was in a position to say, with the hero of his enemy Racine:

"Si je la haïssais, je ne la fuirais pas!" *

I know nothing more touching than the story of Glatigny's marriage, as we find it told in the letters he wrote to M. Garien, the brother of the orphaned girl. I copy these letters from the originals kindly lent me by M. Garien himself:

"BEAUMESNIL, 14*th December*, 1870.

"MY DEAR GARIEN,

"A great event has just occurred. Emma and I have become aware that we love one another, and the first confidant of our love is you. She is willing to become my wife. I am quite giddy with happiness. I so little deserve it, and yet she will have

* "Did I hate her, I should not flee her."
(The quotation is from *Phèdre*, Act I, sc. ii.)

me in spite of it. It was when speaking of you that the avowal came about. Circumstances are sad enough. We shall wait to be married until you are with us again, and until I am quite well, and this will not be long. What a joy it is to know good and pure love. You know what it is, for you have your own betrothed. I did not know what it might be. I have told my mother. She is pleased. Neither of us can humiliate the other with any show of wealth. This will make me work as never yet. I must now become something for the sake of this dear person whose heart we share between us. There need be no separation. When you, too, are married, we can have one household. It is what we long for. Answer soon, my dear brother. Tell me it gives you no cause for grief, and that you have faith that I shall make Emma as happy as she deserves to be. I am no longer alone. I, who saw myself already old, and past use, to have found a sweet and good wife! Write to me quickly. I do not know of anything else that is happening here. Emma occupies my heart and my mind exclusively, until I hear from you again.

"ALBERT GLATIGNY."

"BEAUMESNIL, 19 *December*, 1870.

"Have you had our letters? Have they gone astray in the upset of the last week? News on our side is reassuring. Conveyances get as far as St. Germain, but that is not what I have to say. Did you get the letter I sent you to Lisieux, in which I told you that Emma and I loved one another, and that we were awaiting your return to be married? It was when talking of you, my dear brother, that we were led to speak. She cried at the thought of

being so far from you. It was then that I knew how deeply I loved her. But for these disasters, I could never have avowed it to myself. I can tell you with all confidence that I will make her happy, for it was no sudden infatuation that made me fall at her knees. The sweet and considered sentiment I feel for her had been growing mysteriously within me for long past. I give myself up to a charm that formerly I should never have suspected. Never did I experience this immense joy of loving a good, virtuous, pure woman whom one may reverence. How can she have cared for me? It is beyond me. There is nothing attractive in me. I am ugly, and have never been able to talk to any but actresses. How I shall work now, and what talent shall be seen! Every day we talk of you and your fiancée. Our happiness must be linked with yours. My parents know all, for I would not have it that there should be any single ill-suggestion light on Emma. If you knew how I love her. . . . I say it to you as I should scarcely dare to say it to her. There is an entire change in me. I see life differently. What a beautiful thing it is, a clean and pure love! How full of charm and good! I cry, I am so softened when I look on this sweet creature who works so happy a change in me, and whom my mother calls daughter. All our troubles will soon be over. And you will return. You will make known to me my little sister from Nice, whom Emma tells me of with her good heart. Her delicate affection for you has made me love her. What a woman, this sister of yours! But you know her. I will break off."

The rest of the letter relates to the defence of Bernay. Nothing better and braver in the world

than the feelings that animate Glatigny faced with his country's misfortunes. He, and one old man, salute the French flag as it passes by Beaumesnil. He boils over with love and with hate, he is savage and generous at once.

"BEAUMESNIL, 24 *December*, 1870.

"MY DEAR GARIEN,

"What do you advise us? Wait to get married, Emma and I, till Paris is free, or be married at once at Beaumesnil? You could get leave to come. The latter arrangement would be so far good that Emma and I, who are in need of sunshine, could leave next day and go and wait for spring at Bayonne, or Pau. I could go with my wife, but not while we are only engaged. She has told me that you were aware of my love for her. You must have thought me an odd kind of lover. It was because I loved her so much. I stayed so long at Serquigny only because I was afraid of her. I wanted to go to Brussels to put distance between us. I could not believe that she could like me otherwise than as a good sort of everyday fellow. Never, but for the terror I saw her in the day we thought you at Pont-Audemer when the Prussians came there, could I have dared to tell her that I loved her. How I feared her reply! Never, even in my dreams, did I see her otherwise than as my wife. Even to-day, now that she has said yes, I doubt, and halt. I cry with joy. How lovingly will I watch over this dear little being!

"I embrace you. "ALBERT GLATIGNY."

"P.S.—The country is quiet for a time, and I hope for good, if this continues."

This brother, respected as head of the family, this young man, gentle and austere, a soldier, and engaged to be married, whose consent to the marriage is sought with such ardour and such deference, was at last able to write and send the young couple a letter that I have not before me, but which I can guess at, in which serious and affectionate feeling responds admirably to the deep love of his sister and the poet. How good, and wise, this letter, this double letter, for there is a page for the one and a page for the other, and how welcome! The reply to it, which I have, is one cry of joy, one outburst of frank gaiety, real laughter in spite of tears; her family was in mourning, and Albert Glatigny bewailed his cousin Albert Dupont, dead, poor lad, for his country. Glatigny saw nothing but his Emma. She tried her hand, as I make out, graceful Parisian as she was, at Norman cookery; she tried to melt some butter in a pewter dish; but it was the dish that melted. And our lover is enchanted! That is how time passes when one is in love! And how true it is that love, however great, is made up, minute by minute, of little adventures such as this of the pewter dish.

The next letter is expressive of the same joyfu l ness, but more considered and thought on.

"BEAUMESNIL, 7 *January*, 1871.

"We were waiting with impatience for your letter, to know where to write to you. Here, all goes well with us. Joy has done more for me than a year of medicine. Emma drinks her tar-water, like the angel she is, and she feels that it does her good. . . ."

I pause, and the reader will pause with me, that I may feel to the full all the charm and all the sadness of the illusion in the love of these two excellent creatures, who love and are about to die, visited with the same disease, and, happy in each other, think each that the other is saved. But were they so greatly deceived, after all? Are not the hours of love the only hours worth counting in life? What does it matter though our time be limited, if our love be not? Let us wish for all of us that the dream of life may be, not long and dragged out, but all affection and consumed with tenderness.

I will not continue the letter from where I interrupted it; I come across over many expressions of anger on civic matters, too much bitterness. In excuse, we should have to recall all the horrors of that terrible year, and show that the vanquished of that day might well be permitted to say anything.

". . . As for my dear Emma, I will answer to you for her happiness. I love her as I could not have loved her when I was twenty. I am now a good thirty-one, and I am no longer attracted by the unknown in woman. My love is calm and considered, almost austere. Slowly it has struck its roots in me, and unawares. I feared it. It was because I felt its growth, and dared not hope that Emma would return it, that I fled to Serquigny, and would even have made off again. Well, this dear being was willing to love me. What a debt of gratitude I owe her! What she brings me is not only the dearest and charmingest of wives, but tranquillity and long and honourable life, and a future. . . . She is going to become my wife, she

loves me; she has spoken the words to me in the presence of those dear ones who sanctify love and teach it to be duty. My mother calls her daughter, and I scarcely dare look on her. I am glad that I have been so ill: it brings about a second existence, all hers."

I am glad that I have been ill. I have just come across this reflection again, expressed with quiet intensity by a great writer who could be harsh and rigid, but had his moments of outpouring, and who, also, felt profoundly the meaning of married love. Michelet, lying sick at Nervi, wrote in the course of some pages recently published by his widow:

"I have always had a suspicion that what we call illness, or derangement of function, is in itself a function. Illness brings along with it many a sentiment and idea that would never have come in health; it gives us clearer sight of many things which the rush of life and rapidity of our actions, and our consequent confusion, prevent us from distinguishing."

Yes, we owe to our infirmities and wretchedness the best thing in life, the necessity of love. I shall never forget the dictum of a certain fine old doctor: "Man is only good when he is weak."

"Ah! How fair and good a thing is virtuous love! I see everything in a new light. How I will work, that my dear little wife may be proud of me! I want now to make a name for her sake. The season is passed for idle songs. I am conscious that I can do good work, serious work, and I will do it. I owe it to her, in thankfulness for my regeneration at her hands. . . ."

After a couple of letters exhibiting a gaiety which he was at pains to render childishly irresponsible, that it should be deaf and blind and undisconcerted by events, after these two letters I find a note in patriotic vein, fierce and proud of accent.

Meanwhile, the papers necessary for marriage had arrived; the marriage was celebrated; not in church, nor at the townhall of Beaumesnil, but in Glatigny's own room, where he was confined by lumbar affections which were all too nearly connected with his phthisis. Tubercular trouble developed in his kidneys as well as in his lungs. Slow and dreadful breaking up, only known to the patient by his suffering, and that is not in proportion to the internal disorganization! In this case a sort of simple hearted gallantry did even more than ignorance to keep him in heart. When one thinks that this sweet and heroic young girl, who gave herself to the sick poet, was herself ill and ravaged, less cruelly but not less surely, by the same disease, one feels, I think, an emotion which, while it adds to the sense of desolation, removes something of the bitterness. One tells oneself—they will die together.

"My Dear Brother,

"It is done. The evening before last, good Monsieur Benard passed sentence of perpetual happiness on me. Pains in the lumbar region, which prevented me from walking, brought it about that the marriage was celebrated in my room. Monsieur Delaplace and Vannier were Emma's witnesses; mine were M. Degousy, and his stepfather. My heart is overflowing with happiness. Yesterday we were too full of ourselves to find the

time to write to you. May the same happiness soon be yours! Expect me now at any moment. Three or four days' rest, and we shall spring to your embrace. Here we hope for peace, and I think that war would merely be continuance of disaster. May this dreadful trial soon be past! I give room to Emma. We embrace you with all devotion. "Your brother,

"ALBERT GLATIGNY."

I could transcribe Madame Glatigny's letter, but is there need of fresh witness to show to the life the spirit of this generous creature? Ill herself, she became a healer. Her love went straight out to the suffering poet, even because he was a poet and a dying man. The next letter is dated from Trouville, February 20th, 1871. Glatigny speaks quite gaily of the pains in the loins which will not leave him:

"I am in enjoyment of a thing called a zona. It is not amusing. I know nothing more atrocious than this pain which is privileged to break one's loins. No organs are attacked, it is purely an outside matter, but it is as if one were soundly beaten with sticks. But that will pass. However, it may stir you to indignation, I will avow to you that the further I go, the more in love I am with Emma, and it looks as though it would be always so. What richness! I must pinch myself to assure me that I am awake when I call her wife. Cosette is importunate beyond belief! She is the chief person in the household. Nothing may be done without her permission. . . .

"We embrace you heartily,

"ALBERT GLATIGNY."

Glatigny was writing constantly during his illness. Beyond the odes and dramas that ran in his head, he did some political satires for the *Rappel*, much imitated from the *Châtiments*. A little piece of his, the *Bois*, was played at the Odéon, and met with applause. His disease, now in a more advanced stage, gave him less suffering. In hope of a cure, he left for Bayonne in the autumn of 1872.

"My Dear Victor, "11 *September*, 1872.

"We are on the point of starting."

"13 *September*, 1872.

"On Tuesday, the 17th, we set out for the town of Bayonne. With me go Javotte, Emma, and Cosette. Cosette will travel in her cage: Javotte will have a special basket. As for Emma, I think we may let her go loose in the carriage. My business at the Odéon is pretty well settled, and I think we may pass the winter in peace. These last ten days I have felt no pain, or so little as not to be worth talking about. I am in a hurry to take train. We reckon on staying at Bayonne till the end of March. I am taking work with me. Emma, of whom I ask if there is anything she would have me say, shows her contempt for my powers of expressing her thoughts, by replying that she will write to you herself. So there!

"A hand to each of you.

"Albert Glatigny."

He wrote from Bayonne:

"My Dear Victor,

"What has happened to you? We have been waiting ten days for the letter you promised us.

Give us your news, whether good or bad. . . . Nothing new here. It pours all the time. Emma takes the occasion to put Cosette out of doors every morning for half an hour, and then she exclaims: "Poor beast!" But Cosette is soaked, all the same. I am a bit better. After all, it is not cold. Berton has not written yet. I shall have my manuscript back, and print it. I can see that Duquesnel does not want it, and that he won't take up the *Bois* again, as he promised he would. Try and see Dumaine. You can easily do so on your way to the Châtelet one evening. Tell him who you are, and ask about my *Brizacier*. He can only take it on condition that he has a three-act piece to go with it, so I do not reckon on it. I mean to propose a translation of *Cymbeline*. That would have more chance. . . . Emma sends you embraces, as does Modeste. She has found the novels of Madame de Montalieu at a lending library kept by one Mocochain, and intoxicates herself on this literature.

"I press your hand,

"ALBERT GLATIGNY.

"19 Rue des Faures.

"P.S.—Tell Lemerre to send me Silvestre's book, and anything new that one may rejoice in."

Along with this letter went the following note:

"DEAR MONSIEUR SALVADOR,

"Will you be kind enough to give the manuscript of my play, *L'Illustre Brizacier*, which I left at the Odéon five months ago, to M. Victor Garien, who will bring this note. I see plainly that

M. Duquesnel will never have time to read it, so it is no use cumbering his shelves with it any longer.

"I cordially press your hand.

"ALBERT GLATIGNY."

L'Illustre Brizacier, which he was not to see played, and which was only produced after his death at a small out-of-the-way hall in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, was his favourite work, and we can understand the choice when we know that the hero of the piece, the illustrious Brizacier, is an old vagabond player, without talent, but as enamoured of the stage as Don Quixote is of chivalry—in a word, he is Glatigny.

Glatigny had composed, in 1868, a *Testament de l'illustre Brizacier*, which pleases me much more, I must admit, than the stage piece. It is frank in tone, rugged in style, true in feeling.* This ruggedness and frankness are not to be found in the flourishes and tirades of the comedy.

I saw Glatigny some days before his death in the little house on the hill-side at Sèvres, on a sloping road washed by the rains, where he was assiduously cared for by his wife and his mother. So weak that he could not move, shaken by fits of coughing in which he expected to render up his soul, certain now at length that he was past healing, he would yet contrive some broad joke to excite a smile in his young wife. I found him making, with minutest care, a cardboard theatre for a child. On each side of his room were bookshelves, which, by an ingenious arrangement, were boxes for travelling

* See M. Job-Lazare, p. 78 and *seq.*

and shelves for the dwelling. On these wooden supports stood poets honourably clad. A volume of Théodore de Banville in blue morocco; a book of Victor Hugo's in white vellum. These delicate bindings, so fearful of touch, which had kept their freshness throughout the strangest adventures, witnessed to the faithful regard for his masters in the art entertained by the poor wanderer, now home, alas, from all his wandering.

Glatigny died on April 16th, 1873, in his thirty-fifth year. He had written:

"... Bury me when early day
Brings sunshine, that none need complain,
Struggling on the winding way,
Of stormy gusts, or flaws of rain.
For having never, here below,
Harmed any man, I do desire
That when my corpse shall tombward go,
Pale as a candle in the quire,
No horrid cold of symptoms dire
Result, to sweep from off his strong legs,
Some good true fellow in the mire
Following up this daddy-long-legs."

His friends followed him to the village cemetery on a spring morning of rain and sunshine.

His widow survived him a few months.

THE END